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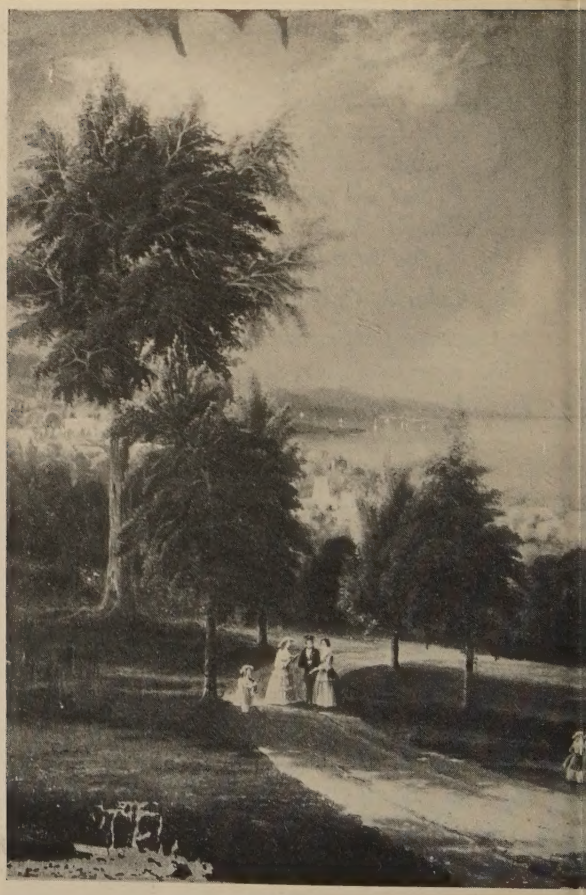
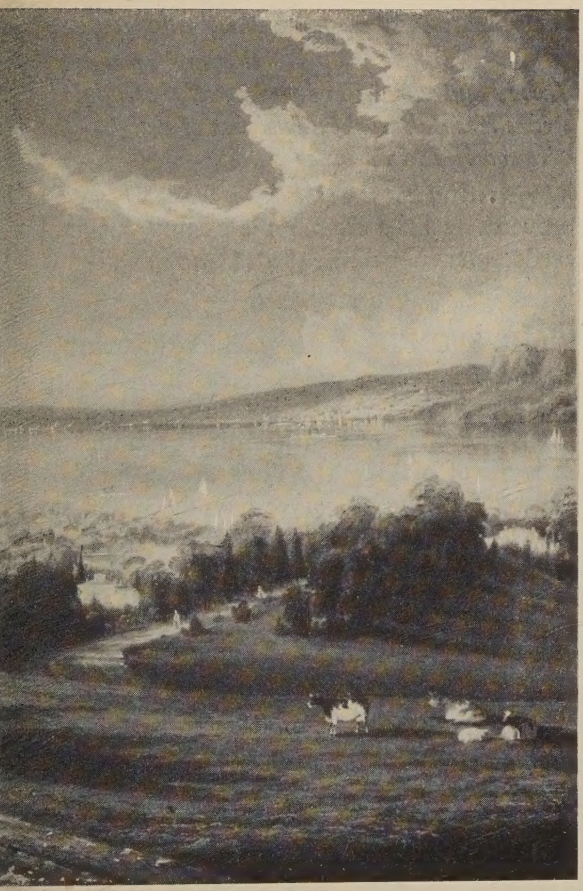
BY MEADE MINNIGERODE

Laughing House
Oh, Susanna!
The Big Year
The Seven Hills
The Fabulous Forties, 1840-1850



VIEW OF THE HUDSON RIVER AT SING SING



From the original oil painting by ROBERT HAVELL, *Junior*

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"MARRIED"

From a contemporary print

The Fabulous Forties

1840-1850

A Presentation of Private Life

By

Meade Minnigerode

Illustrated

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York & London
The Knickerbocker Press
1924

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by
Meade Minnigerode

Made in the United States of America

To

GEORGE

AND

DOROTHY

INTRODUCTION

THE decade of the Forties, in America, was a brilliant three ring circus, filled with marvelous side shows and prodigious natural curiosities, glittering with mirrors and chandeliers, thunderous with brass bands and fireworks, choked with the dust of glorious caravans.

Politically descended from the revolutionary Jackson régime, it saw the continued passing of government from the hands of the professionally select statesmen of the old restricted school into those of the popularly elected representatives of the rank and file; it heard, more and more persistent, the voice of the new West in its deliberations; it put the fateful question of slavery irrevocably into the national limelight. Commercially, in spite of panics and disasters, it laid the foundations of great fortunes, and brought into being an era of mercantile supremacy on the seas, which, during the brief, generously conceived period of its maintenance, added the fame of Boston and Salem, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore to that of Tyre, and Carthage, and Genoa, and Venice on the records of the world's maritime enterprise.

Historically, in a series of swiftly melodramatic events, it witnessed the seizing of a continent, and inscribed in American annals a pageful of inestimably courageous, amazingly inspired, superbly romantic episodes—Texas, Oregon, California, the Plains, the Mormons, and the Gold Rush. Horizons vanished in the Forties, the sun rose and set in adventurous waters, there were a new Heaven and a new earth, new portents in the skies, new stars on the Flag. It was the springtime of the year in America's history, a restless sap flowed in the veins of her people, and they took up their beds and walked. And at the end of the rainbow stretching from coast to coast stood the fabulous pot of gold.

"A vast nation forming, society ever changing, all in motion and activity, nothing complete, the old continent pouring in her surplus to supply the loss of the eastern states, all busy as a hive, full of energy and activity."

Every year multitudes swarming off from the East like bees,

"not the young only, but the old, quitting the close built cities, society and refinement, to settle down in some lone spot in the vast prairies, where the rich soil offered to them the certain prospect of their families and children being one day possessed of competency and wealth. . . . All is energy and enterprise, everything is in a state of transition, but of rapid improvement—so rapid, indeed, that those who would describe America now would have to correct all in the short

space of ten years; for ten years in America is almost equal to a century in the old continent. . . ."

So, in 1839, Captain Marryat described it, prophetically.

Socially, the decade served as the stage for an unfinished, unstabilised company taking part in a national pageant which there had been no time to rehearse. The curtain was up—and the scenery was unpainted, the costumes incomplete, and the lines inadequate. Only the plot was excellent, and the action absorbing.

As for the company itself, it was, as Captain Marryat saw it just as the overture was being played, "a mass of people in a constant state of transition," in which was evident such a divergence of character as that which existed between "the most civilised and intellectual portions of America, such as Boston and Philadelphia, and the wild regions and wilder inhabitants of the west of the Mississippi and Arkansas," swayed by endless local jealousies, as a result of which

"the eastern states pronounce the southerners to be choleric, reckless, regardless of law, and indifferent to religion, while the southerners designate the eastern states as a nursery of over-reaching pedlars, selling clocks and wooden nutmegs. . . . Again, Boston turns up her erudite nose at New York; Philadelphia, in her pride, looks down upon both New York and Boston; while New York, chinking her dollars, swears the Bostonians are a parcel of puritanical prigs and the Philadelphians a would-be aristocracy."

Society, as he found it, was—

"that which must naturally be expected in a new country where there are few men of leisure and the majority are working hard to obtain that wealth which almost alone gives importance under a democratic form of government."

There were, he admits, intellectual and gentlemanlike people in America, but they were scattered. The circle of society was not complete, and wherever one went one found an admixture,

"sudden wealth having admitted those who but a few years back were in humble circumstances. . . . The improvement is rapid, but the vast extent of country which has to be peopled prevents that improvement from being manifest. The stream flows inland, and those who are here today are gone tomorrow, and their places in society filled up by others who ten years back had no prospect of ever being admitted. All is transition, the waves follow one another to the far west, the froth and scum boiling in advance."

It was, primarily, an age of prodigies, paradoxes and parades. Prodigies of display and bathos; paradoxes of elegantly cultured, credulous vulgarities; parades of all the self evident virtues. It achieved the apotheosis of banality in a blaze of wax candles, the sanctification of platitude in a chorus of adjectives. And, all in the same breath, it produced other prodigies of effort and tenacity; greater paradoxes of timidly conventionalised, untrammeled intrepid-

ities; more impressive parades of all the unsuspected valors. It wrought the consecration of self-sacrifice in a bitter waste of deserts, the consummation of endurance in a magnificently patient silence. . . .

These latter prodigies, and paradoxes, and parades, this self-sacrifice and endurance, all the courage, inspiration and romance of the period have been enshrined in countless volumes. No attempt has been made, in these pages, to tread upon that holy ground. Their only purpose is to present a picture, reconstructed principally from contemporary sources, of the private and civic life of those citizens of the Forties, in which the social characteristics of "the Queen City of the greatest Nation upon earth" necessarily fill a large place. Politics, formal history, economics, these have been left untouched in the effort to apprehend a little of the mentality, of the intellectual point of view, of the daily manners of the people who made them possible. History speaks with many tongues. It can express itself in dates and state papers, commercial statistics and territorial emergencies, or it can gossip of old tunes and valentines, forgotten plays and unremembered books, bright silks and satins, twinkling candelabras, and vanished splendors of another day. It is with such gossip, only, that these pages are concerned.

MEADE MINNIGERODE.

NEW YORK,
November, 1923.

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In addition to contemporary novels, published plays, essays, songs, and volumes of verse, the author has made extensive use of the following sources, and wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to them.

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Histories and Geographies

H. H. Bancroft, *History of California.*
T. A. Brown, *History of the New York Stage.*
The Cambridge History of American Literature.
Edward Channing, *History of the United States,* Volume V.
S. G. Goodrich, *A Pictorial Geography.*
O. T. Howe, *Argonauts of '49.*
A. B. Hulbert, *The Paths of Inland Commerce.*
J. B. McMaster, *History of the People of the United States.*
S. E. White, *The Forty-Niners.*

Diaries and Letters

P. T. Barnum, *Autobiography.*
J. F. Cooper, *Correspondence.*
A. Delano, *Life on the Plains.*
Dickens, *American Notes.*
Fanny Elssler, *Letters and Journal.*
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M. M.

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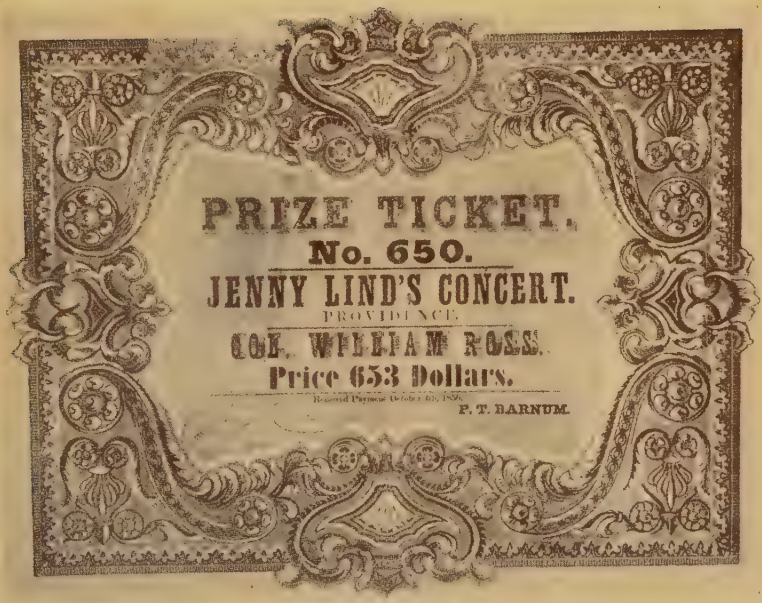

Fac-simile of the Providence Ticket that brought the highest price

The Fabulous Forties

CHAPTER I

A FEW STARS AND SOME STRIPES

1

THE opening years of the decade of the Forties, in America, found a much greater number of its inhabitants than one would have thought possible confidently, and on the whole enthusiastically, awaiting the end of the world. They were always ready to try everything once, and even twice, in the Forties, from Resurrection Pills to salvation.

In 1832, a gentleman named William Miller, a native of New York State, having become convinced of the fact that the second coming of Christ was at hand, had set forth throughout the land to preach his doctrines and predict their consummation, as of April 23, 1843. The elaborate calculations based on biblical prophecies by means of which he arrived at his destructive conclusions are curious enough; what is infinitely more curious, however, and charac-

teristic of the age, is that so many of his hearers should have shared his conviction. Much less, one suspects, as a result of religious fervor than of congenital credulity.

In 1842 Millerites, as his followers were called, were eagerly preparing for the event in almost every town in the Eastern and Middle States. Meetings were held everywhere, while thousands assembled in the enormous tents which his preachers carried with them from city to city. People began to close their shops and dispose of their belongings. The excitement increased, until in March, 1843, husbands were murdering their wives for refusing to become converts, mothers were poisoning their children, men and women were committing suicide and going insane.

The great day came and passed, as days will.

The throngs which had abandoned their homes in nearly every community and taken to the surrounding fields, attired in "ascension robes," returned, disappointed but not discouraged. There had, it seemed, been an error in the calculations. A new date, in October, 1844, was proclaimed and the fervor of the Millerites increased. The Millerite Tabernacle in Boston was opened in May. In Philadelphia, the Julianna Street Meeting House was acquired as a place of worship. In New York, the crowds were so great that it was impossible to reach the doors. A great many wives began to sue their husbands for non-support. Tradesmen advertised "Muslin for Ascension Robes," and notices such as the following were not uncommon:

"This shop is closed in honor of the King of kings who will appear about the twentieth of October. Get ready, friends, to crown him Lord of All."

The second great day came and passed, as uneventfully as the first, except that a good many children were injured and lost, and large concourses of people suffered intensely from hunger and exposure. The King of kings did not appear in Boston, or in New York, or in Philadelphia, nor yet in any other place. One learns that increasing numbers of Mr. Miller's followers deserted him. One presumes that many of them regretted the premature sacrifice of their goods and chattels. The demand for "Muslin for Ascension Robes" decreased perceptibly.

The decade which, at its very beginning, was to have witnessed the destruction of the world, was allowed to run its course, during the progress of which it was to witness events almost as extraordinary, if less cataclysmic in character. The telegraph, the coming of steam as a permanent factor in transportation, the march of the Mormons, the winning of California, the Mexican War, the crossing of the Plains, and at the very end the unbelievable climax of the Gold Rush.

And other events, too, in some ways as significant and in many ways more important than these national movements. Mrs. Brevoort's fancy dress ball, for instance; the dancing of Fanny Elssler; the visit of Mr. Dickens; Mr. Korponay, that elegant Pole, teaching the polka to similarly elegant females; the opening of Christy's Minstrels; the Croton Water

Celebration; and, at the end, just over the border line of the Fifties, the coming of Jenny Lind.

2

There had just been a public census.

In the States of New York and Pennsylvania today there are some two million more people than there were in the entire country in 1840. The total population of those United States was only a little more than double that of the present cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Of those 17,069,453 persons who lived, and moved, and had their being—but principally moved—in the America of the early Forties, 21,000 were drawing pensions for their services in the Revolution—the veterans of 1812 were doubtless clamoring for similar financial recognition—over 4,000,000 were occupied in agriculture, approximately 150,000 lived in some forty cities, and 90,000 were engaged in ocean, and river and lake, navigation. Perhaps 10,000,000 were to be found on the Atlantic slope, nearly 6,000,000 in the Mississippi Valley, and 1,000,000 on the Gulf.

Colliding as it did with the disputed Canadian boundaries, the Oregon Country, and the Republics of Mexico and Texas, the country itself presented only a cramped, chrysalis suggestion of its future expansion, an infant nation in British and Spanish swaddling clothes. From north to south the Rocky Mountains, the Arkansas River, the hundreth parallel of longitude, the Red River, and approximately the

ninety-fourth parallel of longitude formed its official western frontier.

Actually, the western frontier may be said to have consisted of the western boundaries of Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri and Illinois with vague gestures towards the Wisconsin Territory, and the vast Iowa Territory, through which the Oregon Trail led all the way to the Rockies. South of Iowa, westward from Arkansas and Louisiana, the Republic of Texas remembered Goliad and the Alamo and sat on the Rio Grande River making faces at Mexico. Far to the westward, again, white robed friars gathered for vespers in Spanish mission cloisters, under a Pacific sky. In a bay called Yerba Buena, behind its Golden Gate, American whaling ships occasionally stopped for water. Mr. Seward, for his part, had not yet begun to think of Alaska.

Within these boundaries, increasingly as the northern Atlantic seaboard was approached, people were perusing penny newspapers; attending lectures on animal magnetism; consulting phrenologists; absorbing Sherman's Worm Lozenges and other patent medicines; putting Clirehugh's Tricopherous Medicated Compound on their hair; waiting for the Liverpool packet to bring them news of Queen Victoria's accouchement, as in due course it did; criticising Mr. Van Buren's administration; suffering from the depression of the latest panic; traveling by stage on the Cumberland Road; shipping parcels by Harnden's Express; buying cosmoramas and periphaniscopes for their children—childhood today seems shorn of

some of its joy without cosmoramas and periphaniscopes, to say nothing of diablerie and moving birds; sending bouquets of camelia japonica and cupatorium elegans to their sweethearts; using respirators, or—

"Breath warming instruments for giving warmth to the air drawn into the lungs on cold nights—"

trying the *Eglantine* and *Adelia* waltzes, and the *Postillion* quadrilles, and *Rory O'More* or *Land of the West* on—

"Superior pianofortes of various patterns of rosewood and mahogany, with the Grand Action, Harp Stop and Metallic Plates with tablets and hollow cornered fronts, veneered legs and Grecian scrolls—"

visiting the diorama of the Battle of New Orleans; listening to infant prodigies performing on the harp; admiring Tyrone Power and the Ravels; reading the works of Mr. William Gilmore Simms and *Godey's Lady's Book;* playing battledore and dumb crambo; wearing *grôs de Naples* and velvet collars; riding on the inclined planes of the Portage Railway; summering at Saratoga; drinking sangarees and timber doodles; spitting tobacco juice with varying degrees of precision into a million spittoons; throwing pork chop bones into the pit of the Bowery Theatre; treating females with the utmost courtesy and very slight consideration; dining at three o'clock; and going to church on Sundays.

A VIEW OF NEW YORK FROM WEEHAWKEN

From a painting by Charmaille

In Boston 93,000 people maintained twenty-nine benevolent institutions, including the Society for the Moral and Religious Instruction of the Poor and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge; supported five circulating libraries, aside from the Athenæum, the Mercantile, the Columbian and the Apprentices'; subscribed to ten daily newspapers, twenty-seven weeklies, and seven bi-weekly journals; attended lectures at the Boston Lyceum, the Social Lyceum, the Mechanics' Lyceum, and the Massachusetts Lyceum; lived, some of them, on Pearl Street and Summer Street, and on Park Street and Beacon Street and the Common, in elegant houses furnished with porticoes and iron railings, surrounded by tree shaded grass plots fronting on clean, well paved streets, and displayed, all of them, a quality of culture which moved Mr. Dickens to remark that:

"There is no doubt that much of the intellectual refinement and superiority of Boston is referable to the quiet influence of the University of Cambridge. . . . The golden calf they worship at Boston is a pygmy compared with the giant effigies set up in other parts of the vast counting house which lies beyond the Atlantic; and the almighty dollar sinks into something comparatively insignificant, amidst a whole Pantheon of better gods."

Most learned Boston! Oh, excellent young Boston!

Where Boston had its Lyceums, Philadelphia had its Institutes—the Wilbur Fiske Literary Institute, the William West Institute, the Richmond Institute,

the Carroll Institute, without forgetting the Hall of the United Friends of Human Progress. It was a clean, quietly colored, plainly dressed city—the second city in the Union with its 220,000 inhabitants scattered throughout the city proper and the six independent districts of Northern Liberties, Kensington, Spring Garden, Southwark, Moyamensing, and Passyunk—in which people lived in very straight, tree bordered streets paved with brick, purchased European wares in the elegant shops on Chestnut Street, read the *Saturday Evening Post,* took their friends to see the Liberty Bell and the Water Works, and attended evening parties at which politics and philosophy were discussed in an extremely sprightly manner.

Baltimore was resplendent in red brick and marble, tinkling with fountains, justly proud of the fact that at Barnum's Hotel there were curtains on the beds. Washington was a collection of self-conscious public buildings, of isolated private houses with green blinds and red window curtains, surrounded by dust clouds and vacant lots. The City of Magnificent Intentions, as Mr. Dickens called it. Pittsburgh was already covering itself with grime, Albany was the starting point for the "West."

The South was full of slaves, muddy roads, bad hotels in which strangers slept two and three in a room, "anti-fogmatic" beverages, and hospitality. Outside of the aristocratic cities and the great plantations, life was on the whole less amenable than in the North, the population less advanced in manners and

habits, horizons more restricted to the monotonous requirements of a rural countryside.

Richmond and Charleston vied with each other in elegance and refinement, and met every summer at the Virginia Hot Springs—at the White and Gray Sulphur, and at the Red Sulphur, in Bachelor's Row and Philadelphia Row, and in the Carolina Building. Charleston went to Flat Rock, too, when the treacherous greenery of spring, forerunner of the "country fever," had driven it from its stately Santee plantations. Or else it remained quietly in its columned, high piazzaed, mahogany panelled, iron balconied mansions, surrounded by jessamine scented gardens within the sound of St. Michael's chimes, and scanned the list of those eligible to appear at the St. Cecilia balls, attended Race Week, drove on the Battery, consumed cooter stew, zephyrinas and ratafia, read the *Southern Quarterly Review,* and cultivated magnolias.

With its 102,000 inhabitants, its hundred foot wide, four mile long levee, and its location at the outlet of the Mississippi River—that great avenue of commerce and travel along whose banks and upon whose shipping more than two hundred thousand men derived their living sending forward over a hundred million dollars' worth of merchandise—New Orleans was, of course, the leading city of the South. From Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, from Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky and Ohio the rafts and "ripple-kickers" and flat boats came rolling down the River bringing corn, and pork, and flour, and cattle, lumber,

cotton, fur and ore to be transferred to the European vessels crowding the landings.

It was a cosmopolitan city, many tongued with men from every part of the world, itself a medley of Spanish, French and American within its three municipalities. The dingy, grass-grown Third; the French First, in which the Cathedral, the Cabildo, the Orleans Theatre and the renowned St. Louis Hotel, with its famous ballroom, arose from a commotion of narrow, old world, balconied streets filled with cafés, and billiard rooms, and Parisian shops; the American Second, consumed with civic pride, paving its streets, building its St. Charles and Veranda Hotels, substituting progress for charm.

A gay, light-hearted city, given to carnivals, and operas and masquerades. A long, long way from Boston.

In the West it was moving day.

New England, the Middle States, Virginia, were moving into Ohio and Kentucky, into Indiana, Michigan and Illinois, and these in turn into the Wisconsin and Iowa Territories—by rail and canal, by stage and river packet, on foot, on horseback and in wagons, see-sawing over mountains, ferrying across rivers, stramming in and out of frontier towns, following the sun.

From Boston, via the Boston and Albany—the Western Railway—and from New York up the Hudson, to Greenbush, a ferry to Albany, and the western journey was begun. Seven railways to Buffalo, the gateway to the West through which thousands were

pouring, a greater Niagara than the neighboring trippers' paradise. Then the steamers to Cleveland—pretty little Cleveland, with its villas set in the midst of orchards and gardens, and its Franklin Hotel with the observation tower on the roof from which to spy out incoming vessels—and so eventually to Detroit, a nondescript aggregation of unpaved streets, filled with mud and dust in due season.

From Detroit there was great choice of western routes. The Central Railway to Ypsilanti, the stage to St. Joseph, and more steamers. Or the steamer to Toledo, the Erie and Kalamazoo Railway to Adrian, the stage to Michigan City, and more steamers. Or steamers alone, across the Lakes. In any event one arrived sooner or later, unless the steamer blew up, in Chicago, a hustling, growing, ten year old frontier outpost of some five thousand inhabitants, all of them real estate brokers. Fort Dearborn was standing, prairie grass grew in the street, and the only pavement in town was around the Lake House.

Beyond Chicago was Wisconsin and a little settlement called Milwaukee, and some fifty thousand people streaming into Iowa, to the amazement and secret annoyance, no doubt, of sundry redskins.

And while thousands were coming from Buffalo and St. Louis, and more thousands from Cincinnati, that thriving young pork city, still other thousands were clattering along the great Cumberland Road—the National Pike—from Cumberland, in Maryland, through Wheeling, and Columbus, and Indianapolis, to Vandalia, in Illinois.

Across mountains, through deep cuts in the hills, along high embankments, over great stone bridges, as straight as the eighty foot wide highway could be made—past hundreds of inns and wagon houses, prepared, some of them, to shelter five score of horses, Green Trees, and Golden Lambs, and Buckeye Hotels—connecting with countless stage lines, to Cleveland, and Pittsburgh, and Sandusky—conveying daily thousands of coaches along its relays—the busiest, longest, straightest road in the country, a constant pageant of America in motion.

Such, North, South and West, was the view which met the eye of the young Eagle of the early Forties, as he soared above his District of Columbia, his three Territories of Florida, Wisconsin and Iowa, and his twenty-six States, and watched the commotion going on below during the first years of the fabulous new era.

3

And from Mr. Goodrich's *Pictorial Geography,* published in Boston in 1841, one learns just what the young Eagle himself thought of it all.

The people of New England, it seems, were grave, though not without humor; many of their amusements were of a reflecting kind, and their conversation inclined rather to useful than to light or gay subjects. When not attending lectures, they spent a great deal of time, apparently, whittling sticks. They were moral and pious. If not ardent, they were to a great degree persevering, and though inquisitive they were

equally communicative. They were shrewd and calculating, yet not deceitful. They were extremely cautious, and seldom answered a direct question without knowing why it was asked. The character of the Puritans had, of course, given a certain tone to the amusements and holidays, and theatres were seldom even fashionably attended. The situation of the females marked a high grade of society. Their employment was always domestic, and within the house, and they were never seen engaged in agricultural occupations with men.

In the Middle States, however, life was already more of a pastime and less of a solemnity, although Mr. Goodrich would not have said so.

In New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, for one thing, dress was generally richer, and more fashionable, than in the other cities of the Union. It possessed its peculiarities, to which the Germans contributed largely by their habit of wearing broad brimmed hats and purple breeches, while the females went around in very short petticoats; and then there were the Quakers who had "their own neat and plain fashion," which was not inelegant, and was, in fact, "the perfection of neat simplicity."

New York, "the great commercial emporium," had the character of all commercial cities. Philadelphia and Baltimore had escaped much more than New York the moral evils—ah, those moral evils—that seem to be inseparable from great cities, and which "appear to be the price that men pay for what advantages there are in living in large communities."

In Baltimore and Philadelphia the manner of life was far more quiet and domestic than in New York, and in Philadelphia the arts and sciences were more successfully cultivated.

So Mr. Goodrich observes, and yet, on December 25, 1839, Mr. James Fenimore Cooper found it necessary to write:

"I am amazed and shocked with the drunkenness that appears in the streets of Philadelphia today. I have seen nothing like it, before, since our return home. Most of the drunkards have been young men, too—apprentices apparently—and roaring drunk."

Young men, too—as though such a display on the part of older Philadelphians would have been less unexpected. However, to return to Mr. Goodrich's Middle States.

The amusements were more varied there than in other sections of the country. As the three largest cities in the Union were distant one from the other but about a hundred miles, there were greater facilities and encouragements for "scenic exhibitions," and the theatres, especially in New York, were much attended. In New York also there were several extensive public gardens in which a great variety of costly fireworks, shows and amusements were offered in the warm season, and when lighted up at night they were very brilliant and attracted crowds of people. Horse racing, too, was honored in the Middle States, and in the winter time skating was practiced with great animation.

THE HOBOKEN AMUSEMENT PARK

From an old print

As for the Southerners, and when Mr. Goodrich said Southerners he meant planters exclusively, "the most obvious and general modification of character is that which is made by the system of domestic slavery." At that, the more odious characteristics of such a condition were seldom found in the Southern States, as the system had there "almost every mitigation that is consistent with security." The character of the Virginians and South Carolinians was, he thought, in some respects superior to that of the other Southern States. The Virginians seldom traveled; they were consequently much attached to "all the things which make up the complex idea of home," and hospitable to a degree which deeply impressed Mr. Goodrich's New England frugality. The South Carolinians of the Low Country, on the other hand, compelled annually to vacate their homes by the threat of fever, roamed further afield and were, as a result of this traveling propensity, social, liberal and intelligent. Not that the life of a Southern agriculturist was one of indolence and ease. Quite the reverse, it was one of far greater activity than was led by gentlemen of wealth elsewhere.

In general Mr. Goodrich found that the people of the South had more haughtiness, courtesy, and a higher estimation of personal dignity than those of the North. "A planter would be more apt to do what he would be sorry for than what he would be ashamed of." A slight wound of pride was more strictly avenged than a greater injury to property, and a lack of courtesy was as much reprobated as a breach of

morals. Duelling was, of course, the natural growth of such a state and was but too well established by custom. The most general amusement was horse racing, and the races often attracted "a great concourse of ladies as well as gentlemen."

A special word for Louisiana, where the state of society was somewhat different from that of the other States. It received its character from the French—oh well, of course—and was "probably more gay if not more dissolute." There was more gaming, more duelling, and less education, and the planters there were exceedingly hospitable, generous, and fond of amusement, though somewhat haughty and passionate.

And then the whole strange business of the exotic South gets the better of Mr. Goodrich, and he declaims the following—

"The best gifts that nature has bestowed upon the Southern States are dashed with evils. The sun that ripens the orange and the pomegranate draws pestilent vapors from the surface; and the scent of the rose and the jessamine is mingled with the breath of pestilence. It is perilous to breathe the fresh air of the morning, or to encounter the rays of the sun at noon, or to enjoy the dews of night. The insects have powers of intolerable annoyance; they must be kept at bay by nettings which obstruct the circulation of air, and the sleeper rises at morning weary and unrefreshed. The hurricanes sweep away the harvests, and the lightning rends the forest."

He must have had an uncomfortable time of it in the pestilential South, with his hurricanes, and his insects, and his nettings.

Concerning the West, Mr. Goodrich is vague, just a trifle vague. Society there, he explains, was nearer to its elements than in older communities and the distinction of classes was slight. Aside from that the Kentucky character pervaded all the Western States, and the Kentuckian was "bold in his bearing and lofty in his port." His dignity was dashed with humor and gayety, and he had a degree of modest assurance that belongs to men who are satisfied with their own qualifications. Hospitality and generosity which are virtues in common men were none in the Kentuckian, they were the effect of his impulses, a part of his instinct. He was not given to falsehood—the paragraph grows biblical—for he was not accessible to fear. He was courteous with the civil, and with the ungentle he was also froward. His pride was part of his life, and his honor the best of his possessions.

. . .

This is all very illuminating, but it is in the section on England that one finds one of the most illuminating passages of all.

"There is a correspondent difference," it appears, "in the condition of the females of the higher classes of England and America. The women of the middle ranks, as well as the ladies of quality, in England are more accustomed to mix freely in the society of the other sex. Their lives are less secluded, less domestic. The married ladies, in particular, are less confined to the society of their husbands, and often mingle in matters of business, which are here left exclusively to men.

"If the English females are therefore better

acquainted with the world, they are inferior to ours in delicacy—" and without delicacy, of course, all was lost. "The rules of decorum in their state of society are somewhat relaxed, and topics, which would here be considered improper, are freely discussed or alluded to as legitimate themes of conversation, between the sexes, there." A list of the topics is unfortunately not appended. "But if our ladies have the advantage in natural delicacy, we must admit that, in artificial refinement, those of England surpass them. Their education is more thorough, their accomplishments more numerous and perfect. In the art of conversation they excel, and bestow upon fashionable society that exquisite polish which is never found here."

Rule, Britannia!

4

"Broadway, a wide and bustling street which, from the Battery gardens to its opposite termination in a country road, may be four miles long."

So, in 1842, Mr. Dickens found it, filled with omnibuses, hackney cabs, gigs, phaetons, tilburies—and pigs. As he approached New York from the East River and the Bay he saw stretched out before him confused heaps of buildings with here and there a spire or steeple, looking down upon the herd below; and a forest of ships' masts, cheery with flapping sails and waving flags; and countless steam ferry boats laden with people, and coaches, and boxes, all traveling to and fro, and never idle.

The ferry boats sound familiar enough, but the ships' masts, cheery with flapping sails, proclaim an-

other age, and a completely vanished one—the age of the great Liverpool packets and China fleets, when red shirted sailors sang in chorus to the chanty man's tune along South Street, and the Cherry Street dance halls resounded with the heavy stepping polkas of lime juicers and packet rats. And the spires and steeples, looking down upon the herd below, they, too, have vanished long since from the city's sky line, dwarfed by the topless towers of trade—how someone in the Forties would have enjoyed saying that, if he could have foreseen.

Upon closer inspection, fresh as he was from the striking courtesies of the Boston custom house, Mr. Dickens found that:

"The beautiful metropolis of America is by no means so clean a city as Boston . . . the houses are not quite so fresh colored, the sign-boards are not quite so gaudy, the gilded letters not quite so golden, the bricks not quite so red, the stone not quite so white, the blinds and area railings not quite so green, the knobs and plates upon the street doors not quite so bright and twinkling."

It must have been quite sprightly, though, all white, and red, and green, and shining with brass and silver. And extremely noisy, what with the newsboys, and the oystermen's horns, and the chimney sweeps crying their trade, and the fruit vendors and the itinerant locksmiths, and the ragmen with bells on their carts, and the clattering traffic. And the pigs. And the Target Companies—the Guards, the Fencibles, the Sharpshooters, parading up the street with

bands, and pioneers with beards and axes hired for the occasion—the pioneers, not the beards—and muskets and belts, also hired for the occasion, and the company plated ware strung on a pole, carried at the head of the procession. Stepping over the pigs.

And it was rightly called the metropolis of America, the busiest, wealthiest, smartest city in the Union, even if not quite so everything as Boston. A metropolis of more than three hundred thousand inhabitants on whose Broadway, most fashionable of all American streets—beneath the shade of the Lombardy poplars and before the pillars covered with placards advertising the merchandise within the elegant shops—the finery displayed by the ladies was amazing, and "the show of shawls, bonnets, feathers, furs, and fine waists pinched almost to nothing, astonishing." A street on which at any time could be seen enough velvet at four dollars a yard to cover it from one end to the other. A city in which "fashion and luxury were running riot," and compared to which no other city in the world could boast of so many "expensively dressed women gorgeous in bright colored silks, satins, and ermine lined cloaks, costly furs, ostrich feathers and pink and blue rohan bonnets." Escorted by beaux in Byron collars and richly tasseled cloaks, with whiskers under their chins.

Stepping over the pigs. . . .

5

In 1841, one is told, the progress of the uptown movement in New York was indicated by the removal

of the Church of the Ascension from Canal Street to Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street. The quality of that day lived on Park Place, on Murray, and Chambers, and Warren Streets, on Broadway, and of course on the Bowling Green and on St. John's Park, in double houses ornamented with hand wrought iron fences and rails. Some bolder spirits were already essaying residence on Lafayette and Waverley Places, on Washington Square, and on lower Fifth Avenue. The Bowery was in its own peculiar form of glory. The Castle Garden, at the Battery, was a favorite resort, and at Fifth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street stood the far famed Madison Cottage road-house. While in theory the city extended much further, guide books of the period found it unnecessary to provide maps north of Twenty-third Street. Bloomingdale, Harlem, even the Murray Hill were places where one summered. As late as 1847 Mr. Philip Hone was recording the fact that:

"My children called to take me to a party at Mrs. Robert Ray's away up at the corner of Twenty-eighth Street and the Ninth Avenue. The house is one of those places which have lately sprung up in places where a few years since cattle grazed, and orchards dropped their ripened fruit. This magnificent abode of costly luxury"—the mentality of the whole decade lies embalmed in that majestic sentence—"This magnificent abode of costly luxury, now the *town* residence of my good friend Mr. Ray, stands on the very spot where his father's garden, away *out of town,* flourished long since my hair turned gray."

The Park of the Forties, so constantly referred to by visitors to the metropolis, was the City Hall Park, to which on the Fourth of July the country people flocked to enjoy the booths, watch the fireworks, and consume spruce beer and oranges, to the great annoyance of those who had to clean up after them. Niblo's and the Café des Mille Colonnes were the elegant gathering places, and there was no finer hotel in the country than the Astor House, that vast and elegantly ornate hostelry, five stories high, with its three hundred luxurious dollar a day rooms, in fact "that simple and chaste, though massive establishment which for centuries to come will serve as a monument to the wealth of its proprietor. . . ."

And across the river was Hoboken, "beautiful rosy Hoboken," that lovely spot which young females might visit "with impunity." Surely no picture of the city in the Forties can so well bring to mind a conception of its character as the following paragraphs from the New York *Herald* of 1841, in which it is announced that:

"This charming summer resort is now in its full bloom and beauty. It has been much improved since last season. The walks are improved, and the accommodations of a superior character to those of past years. By all means take a walk over to Hoboken once or twice a week if you love health and happiness.

. . .

"The proprietors of the Hoboken House are spirited and gentlemanly, and the house is one of the most excellent in this vicinity. Its site is beautiful,

affording a grand view of the city, bay, islands, fortifications and shipping, and is within one mile and a half of the city, and but a few rods from the steamboat landing. Its rooms are airy and pleasant, and the whole style of the house agreeable. Every species of refreshment or luxury can be obtained here, and the recreations and amusements are endless. The bathing houses, the gymnasium, the shady arbors, the swings, the beautiful collection of natural curiosities —among which are the musk kangaroo, the anaconda, the great boa constrictor, the large serpent, etc., etc., all under the care of an intelligent and polite keeper —are all that the heart of mortal could wish."

It is, after all, more than a picture of New York. It is the Forties themselves. Every species of refinement and luxury, a beautiful view, shady arbors, and some natural curiosities—all that the heart of mortal could wish.

CHAPTER II

THE DIVINE FANNY

1

Park Theatre, This Evening, May 14,
will be performed the Farce of
DUMB BELLE
after which
Mademoiselle FANNY ELSSLER will appear in
her celebrated dance of La Cracovienne!
To which will be added
BACHELOR'S BUTTONS
To conclude with
LA TARENTULE
MAD'LLE FANNY ELSSLER!
Doors open at 6½. Performance commences at 7.
Boxes $1 — Pit 50 cents — Gallery 25 cents.

2

They will try, the historians, to assure their readers that in the spring of 1840 the leading citizens of

New York, and of Boston and Philadelphia, were preoccupied with financial disasters, engrossed in political contests. Not at all. They were all breathlessly awaiting the arrival of Miss Fanny Elssler from Paris.

And who was Miss Fanny Elssler? Is it possible that in some future age people will be asking And who was Miss Anna Pavlowa? It is, alas, possible.

No better method suggests itself of reintroducing Miss Elssler to the continent that witnessed some of her greatest triumphs than a reference to that Memoir which served the same purpose in the first year of her American tour—*The Memoir of the Public and Private Life of Fanny Elssler,* published in 1840—no doubt, in fact undoubtedly, the work of some devoted press agent. That he was a good press agent, indifferent to mere prevarication, is manifest in that slight error at the outset, by means of which he removed eight years from the burden of Miss Elssler's accumulated days, giving her twenty-two birthdays only at the time of her New York début in place of the less romantic thirty which she had actually achieved.

To begin with, by way of preface,

"in editing a memoir of a performer on whom all the superlative panegyric of our language has been lavished, it is difficult to select terms of sober commendation which will not appear tame, even insipid. . . . Perhaps no performer who has ever visited our shores could have sustained uninjured the torrent of ranting rhapsody elicited by the perfections of Mademoiselle Elssler—except the subject of our memoir herself."

And then to solid, box office facts.

"This most extraordinary young woman was born in Vienna, in Germany"—well, they talked German anyway, those Austrians—"in the year 1818," June 23, 1810, would have been more accurate, "of respectable parents who had no connection with the Opera—she being the first of her line who ever entered public life." No theatrical taint, be it clearly understood, no operatic stigma, in the family. On the contrary, a background of eminently respectable domesticity—*Godey's Lady's Book* please copy. There was nothing congenitally thespian about Miss Elssler, no suggestion of inherited acrobacy.

One of those tremendously trivial chances, however, placed the child, Fanny, in the Imperial Academy of Vienna. It seems that a "coryphean" of the Opera lived not far from the Elsslers. The two sisters, Fanny and Theresa, were all the time begging to be taken to the theatre to see their splendid neighbor in her terpsichorean finery, echoes of which had reached the ears of those two precocious little pitchers. Their father, "a prudent man, who had other views in life for his daughters," long objected, but finally succumbed to their prayers. They might visit the Opera once. Fanny was enchanted, dazzled, carried away. When she went in, and the light fell over her, she thought that "the place was Heaven, illuminated in honor of God's victory over Satan." An original conception, to say the least. To that illumination she determined to add the lustre of her own star.

The possible objections of her respectable parents do not figure in the Memoir. Fanny, and Theresa likewise, began to study the dance. Fanny, in particular, made rapid progress. She was present on the stage in a minor rôle on the night when Taglioni, whom she was to outshine, made her début. She gave evidence of such proficiency that she passed directly into the Corps Coryphean without lingering in the more plebeian Corps de Ballet. Finally, at the age of *seven,* she made her own triumphant début in the leading rôle of the new ballet, La Fée.

Her subsequent career was rapid and brilliant beyond precedent. When scarcely fourteen, she was summoned to Naples by the royal family, where she danced before the court in a blaze of glory. Immediately afterwards she returned to Vienna to become the *première danseuse* of the Imperial Opera. Then it was that a lonely, white clad, consumptive young man, called by some the King of Rome and by others the Duc de Reichstadt, fell in love with her. For the sake of his peace of mind, the Memoir would have one believe, Fanny withdrew herself from Vienna. At all events she went to Berlin, where she was more than graciously received by the King of Prussia and perhaps not quite so graciously by the Queen, and where they placed a royal equipage at her permanent disposal and offered her a life pension of $3000 a year in return for eight seasons. Fanny, who had other things to think about, shook her raven locks and went to London. This was in 1834, and in that country whose motto is *Honi soit qui mal y pense* she brought

a daughter into the world whose birth was not saluted with any salvos of artillery. Nor was it recorded in the Memoir.

After that,

"to follow her from London to the Continent, and there from city to city, would be only to record her triumphs wherever she moved. She led captive the hearts of all. Offers of marriage from men in the first circles of society met her in every city. She was followed from London to Paris by bevies of infatuated swains, and her traveling train at length resembled a royal cortège. In many places the enthusiasm of the populace was carried to absurd and degrading excesses. It was a common occurrence for foolish young men to unharness her horses and draw her carriage to her lodgings—a practice which we blush to say has been imitated in one instance in this country. The wildest enthusiasm furnishes no excuse for such base servility. Mademoiselle Elssler felt herself degraded by such a despicable proceeding; and, in Baltimore, the next night, she sought her lodgings privately, and on foot."

Dear, dear!

Miss Elssler sailed from Bristol in the steamer *Great Western* on April 15, 1840, and arrived in New York on May 3. Her manager "had engaged her with fear, if not with reluctance." She herself was in great trepidation. The French press, anxious to detain her in Paris, had assured her that "she would receive no favor" here—our notions were so prudish that anything like an abbreviated garment would be visited with national wrath—and as in the Cracovienne

and some other dances her steps were thought sufficiently liberal even for the French capital—that here aught approaching a free use of her limbs would be a signal for the horror stricken burghers to leave the theatre and pass an ordinance requiring her to quit the country, under penalty of fine and imprisonment.

"Under these impressions it is not wonderful that the heart of Elssler quailed when she heard the surging of the crowd—the uproar of its getting seated, and the tumult with which an American audience always sinks into quiet . . . but her last *pas seul* was executed with a brilliancy that struck the spectators like the discharge of an electric battery. The Rubicon was crossed—she was safe. . . ."

American audiences have traveled a long way, to be sure, since the night of May 14, 1840, in the matter of abbreviated garments and a free use of the limbs, but at that the French press of those days seriously underestimated the national powers of assimilation. No one left the Park Theatre that night until the performance was over, and then only because they were putting out the gas jets.

3

It is difficult, in these unamazed days when great first nights pass off with a round of curtain calls calmly, and only seldom vocally, accorded, to realise the unrestrained uproar, under similar circumstances, of the supposedly infinitely more decorous Forties. There were no home runs, no touchdowns, in the For-

ties, and it was at the theatre that an opportunity was found for exercising the lungs. Churlish persons may point out that it cost them less to be unrestrained in the Forties. Deliberately uncharitable persons may add that possibly they were more easily pleased, more given to hysterical outcries and mirations. The fact remains that in those days, and on those great nights, emotions stirred warmly and unabashed in the most refined bosoms, spontaneous impulses, even on the part of the most elegant, required no mitigation, provoked no self-conscious disdain, gratitude and appreciation were simple, familiar, generously displayed attributes, readily expressed in unembarrassed tumult.

Only from contemporary writings may one hope to catch a glimpse of the excitement which swept the town, of the eager, vivid curiosity which seized all minds concerning the illustrious ballerina—an echo of the rapturous frenzy which greeted her, when Miss Elssler finally appeared. There was national pride at stake, of course. She was so famous abroad, so frantically sought after in all the capitals of Europe, what if America should fail to appreciate her, should really find it impossible to accept her art, should lay itself open to the ridicule of older, more sophisticated communities? Those articles in the French press already! There was something of the sort in the air, surely. If Miss Elssler was in trepidation on that opening night, who knows but what her audience sat in similarly anxious seats?

She landed from the *Great Western,* blowing

FANNY ELSSLER AS "LA CRACOVIENNE"

A contemporary dance music cover

kisses, no doubt, to Captain Hoskins, and the event finds room at once in Mr. Philip Hone's diary, in which the ex-Mayor of New York is of the opinion that the celebrated opera dancer will create a sensation, since she has been anxiously looked for and is second only in Europe to "the immortal occupant of mid-air," Taglioni. Miss Elssler would not have blown Mr. Hone any kisses for that, but of course at the time he probably shared, with all outspoken diarists, the illusion that his journal was a private catalog of personal impressions, not a public dispensary of future revelations. A few days later, on May 11, he records entertainingly that:

"On my return from Long Island I found two letters, which were brought by Fanny Elssler, she who has set New York agog for marvelous saltatory exhibitions," only in the Forties could anyone have kept a diary in such terms—"and whose heels are to turn all our heads." One letter was from Samuel Welles, and the other from Christopher Hughes, in which he asked his friend Hone to give to this really excellent and kind hearted stranger the benefit and the honor of his kindness and protection, while assuring him that Miss Fanny was as good as she was graceful.

Under the circumstances what could an ex-Mayor of New York do? As he himself points out, he could not, therefore, "do less than call and pay my respects to the fair *danseuse* as early this morning, after my return, as possible." He went, a monument of civic welcome, to the American Hotel at twelve o'clock,

sent in his card, and was told the lady was not dressed but would be charmed to see Monsieur at four o'clock. "Now," he remarks, "I think, four o'clock being his dinner time, Monsieur will not find it quite convenient to visit Mademoiselle at that hour."

But he went back, all the same. Perhaps not at four o'clock, although one prefers to think so, but in any case on the next day, May 12, he writes:

"I called yesterday upon Miss Fanny Elssler. She is an exceedingly fascinating person, but not very handsome. Her face has lost its bright bloom, and her complexion appears to be somewhat faded—the result, probably, of the violent muscular exertions which are required in the profession." All one can say is that, from all accounts, Mr. Hone was hard to please. "But her manners," he continues, "are ladylike. She is gay and lively, and altogether the most perfectly graceful lady I have ever seen; further the deponent saith not."

Now what did he mean by that?

"She is to make her first appearance," he concludes, "at the Park Theatre, on Thursday evening, in the ballet of La Tarentule which all the world will witness who can gain admission to the theatre. Fashion and taste, and curiosity are all on tiptoe to see her on tiptoe, and the pocket of many a sober pa will be drained to furnish the means to his wife and daughters to witness her *pas.*"

And then the great first night. It must have been late when he returned home, for a gentleman of sixty,

but he sat down at once to write the following, while it was all fresh, and ringing in his ears:

"Many and many a night has passed since the walls of the Park have witnessed such a scene. Fanny Elssler, the bright star whose rising in our firmament has been anxiously looked for by the fashionable astronomers since its transit across the ocean was announced, shone forth in all its brilliancy this evening. Her reception was the warmest and most enthusiastic I ever witnessed. On her first appearance, in a *pas seul* called La Cracovienne, which was admirably adapted to set off her fine figure to advantage, the pit rose in a mass, and the waves of the great animated ocean were capped by hundreds of white pocket handkerchiefs. . . .

"Then came the ballet, La Tarentule, in which the Elssler established her claim to be considered by far the best dancer we have ever seen in this country. At the falling of the curtain she was called out; the pit rose in a body and cheered her, and a shower of wreaths and bouquets from the boxes proclaimed her success complete. She appeared greatly overcome by her reception, and coming to the front of the stage, pronounced, in a tremulous voice, in broken English, the words 'a thousand thanks,' the naïveté of which seemed to rivet the hold she had gained on the affections of the audience. . . . The house, although full in every part, was not crowded, and a more respectable audience never greeted the fair *danseuse* in any country she has charmed."

The press, on the day following Miss Elssler's début, was equally eloquent. She had made her first appearance before an audience that filled the house

from pit to Shakespeare gallery, and whose shouts and clappings had prevented the continuation of the performance for several minutes after her entrance. The eulogistic reports of the French and English journals had not been exaggerated in their descriptions of her beauty of person or grace of movement. She was, the critics decided, about the medium size, with a figure of perfect proportions, expressive features, fine classical head, black hair, and dark flashing eyes, and nothing could be imagined more elegant than her attitudes and motions.

It was not an immediate triumph, however. Mr. Hone to the contrary, her first piece, the Cracovienne, was not well selected to display the beauties of her form or dancing. The dance itself was not a striking one, and the costume, being exceedingly heavy and awkward—the famous costume, with the red boots and the Polish cap—required all the grace of the dancer to keep a feeling of disappointment from passing over the whole assemblage. She was, of course, vociferously cheered for all that, but not with that enthusiasm which subsequent parts of her performance called forth. An anxious moment, that, for the audience, one is convinced. Was it all going to fall flat after all?

But no—when the curtain rose on the ballet of La Tarentule, the anticipations, raised by the glowing accounts which had preceded her, were fully realised. This ballet, which concerned itself with the effects of the bite of the tarantula, required in the chief character the manifestation of every variety of passion,

which was effectively executed in the pantomime of Fanny Elssler. Her arms, her feet, her body, her eyes, her features—every part of her anatomy except her legs, of which in the Forties she was, of course, not officially possessed—were all in harmonious motion, struggling to give expression to the various feelings with which the spirit labored. The effects of the tarantula bite, the shuddering of the whole frame, broken by wild attempts at dancing, were a masterpiece of pantomimic acting.

That was what appealed to them most, apparently. Something more than mere saltatory exhibitions. Miss Elssler had grace, she was poetic motion personified, but she was also a great actress. There was a personality on the stage, as well as absorbing aerial peregrinations. They were, perhaps, not so easily pleased in the Forties.

As for her dancing, it had the merit of combining great celerity of movement with the most perfect grace and ease. It was extremely chaste—*that* for the French press—and at the same time full of spirit and force. There were, one is glad to learn, none of those extraordinary leaps, whirlings, and frightful distortions of the body and limbs which usually marked stage dancers. Her recoveries from any *tours de force* or vigorous efforts were instantaneous, her attitudes unstudied and easy. The movements of her feet were swift as a flash, and her whole appearance, during her performance, that of one who had given herself up with complete self-abandonment to the impulses of the dance. The result of it all was that she

was called before the curtain amid showers of roses and thunders of applause. . . .

And while New York ordered other bouquets, and prepared further applause for her second performance, Miss Elssler herself tended the roses of that first night banked high about her rooms at the American Hotel, and wrote a letter to Europe, with the thunder of her first reception ringing in her ears. Already on the preceding day she had written:

"The eventful day of my début is upon me, tomorrow will be a souvenir for the rest of my life. I cannot disguise from myself the importance of the result. If I fail to gratify the unreasonable ideas of my poor skill prevailing here—and how can I hope to do so—the consequences will be to me most fatal. . . . These reflections quite unnerve me, and I am further alarmed at the extraordinary excitement in the theatrical world. The papers are every day full of details, personal and otherwise, concerning me, and if I was not so agitated, I should be flattered."

And then after the unforgettable night which, one hopes, did indeed remain a souvenir for the rest of her life, she wrote once more, a letter in which one seems to hear it all again.

"May 16, 1840"—there was no time to write on May 15, what with callers to be received, and the precious notices to be read—"I am satisfied, nay, far more, rejoiced to my inmost heart, by the most unexpected manifestation of popular feeling in my favor, but I will relate to you the history of the night. I was nervous beyond anything I ever experienced before.

. . . My hotel faces the theatre, and before I went to repose, as is my constant habit on a dancing night, I caught, unhappily, a glimpse of the immense concourse that had already assembled in the street some hours before the doors were to open. . . . On going to the theatre I had urgent need of the good natured encouragement given me, for I had well nigh lost command of myself. I dressed for the Cracovienne, and listened in the silence of my room to the confused sound of murmurs that reached my ear, and indicated the presence of that excited throng, crowded as I was told to the roof, whose judgments I was to challenge. . . ."

What a moment, in the silence of her room, while Mr. Hone and his friends were gathering out front. Perhaps she thought of Naples, of the silly old King of Prussia, of London and Paris, of Mr. von Gentz, of the white clad boy in Austria who was dead now. Perhaps she wished that her father had never allowed her to visit the Opera, that one fatal time in Vienna. Perhaps she powdered her nose. And the manager outside the door, biting his nails, and sister Katty running back and forth, bubbling over in German about a pair of slippers mislaid, perhaps, or some dreadfully expensive flowers, possibly, sent by some important nonentity. . . .

"I had hardly strength to walk upon the stage. The curtain rose, and breathless silence prevailed; the music struck up, and the moment came, and I appeared. The scene that ensued beggars description. The whole house rose, and such a shout ascended, as

stunned my senses, and made me involuntarily recoil. Men waved their hats, and women their handkerchiefs, and all was inexplicable dumb show for several mortal moments." Immortal moments, she meant. "I stood confounded, with tears streaming down my face. Order at length restored, the dance began. How I went through it I know not . . . but I must have danced as I hope never to dance again. I was encored to the echo, and in a few moments recommenced amid the most cheering applause."

She had no illusions, however, concerning the state of the audience. Their vociferations had not deafened her to the premonition, and, one suspects, the voluble assurances of sister Katty, that she had, on the whole, danced rather badly that first time. The manager was doubtless very polite about it, but she had watched Taglioni too long not to know. While she was changing her costume in the silence of her room, she probably spent less time thinking about the King of Prussia, and much more worrying about La Tarentule.

"A vaudeville succeeded, and I retired to get ready for the ballet. I was not curious to know the feeling of the house for I feared it must be unfavorable. . . . I soon learned that such a state of feeling prevailed as had been calculated on. Great confusion of opinion and impression, perhaps some disappointment, but just that blank state of mind that I might hope the most from. This roused my soul to action and I longed to be at them. As I dashed in for the ballet the sensation was hardly less strong than at first. My appearance in feminine and coquettish attire seemed more in harmony with their expecta-

tions, and they evidently liked my looks. A loud murmur of surprise and intense satisfaction rose on every side, and gave me a stirring impetus."

She appears altogether admirable at that moment, dashing out pluckily to retrieve the evening. And then, the deluge.

"It is not for me to say what I did, or how I did it . . . I danced without effort, and even Katty applauded some of my feats. The most deafening exclamations of delight broke at rapid intervals from all parts of the house, till they lashed themselves into a perfect tempest of admiration. Never before did I behold so vast an assembly so completely under the sway of one dominant feeling. . . . The curtain fell amid a roar that sounded like the fall of mighty waters, and that soon brought me before them. Their applause was perfectly frantic, cheers and bravos saluted me, and flowers and wreaths fell like rain upon me. You cannot suppose that I stood unmoved amid such sights and scenes. My heart beat till I thought it would leap from its socket, and my eyes overran in grateful testimony of their fervent goodness. I essayed to speak and stammered forth a few simple words of thanks, and withdrew. The ordeal is passed, doubt no more affrights me, and what a prospect dawns upon me!"

Mr. Sylvain was gathering up the floral tributes. The manager had stopped biting his nails. Nobody cared any more about the mislaid slippers. Where did Miss Elssler wish to take supper? One imagines the audience going home enormously pleased with itself, too. . . .

4

And what did Miss Elssler think of America? Her letters and journal are especially edifying on that point, and reveal not only what she thought of America—to say nothing of herself—but also what Europe thought of the barbarous, trans-oceanic republic which, against all warnings and advice, she had obstinately determined to visit.

"Well, Mina," she wrote from Paris, in November, 1839, "I am about to cross the Atlantic, and proceed to America! I dare say you have heard of some such place, but, like myself, have a very indistinct notion of its whereabouts." It was a foolish thing to do, she confesses, considering all the advantages and enjoyments of her position in Paris, which she then proceeds to enumerate with considerable gusto. There was, evidently, no cause for trepidation on her part in the French capital. Her professional career, she modestly admits, had reached its zenith; there she was, sitting securely on an operatic throne that had dazzled her eye and fired her ambition since girlhood. Never was artiste more completely seated in public sympathy, undisturbed by rivalry, unassailed by critics, and popular even with that formidable foe, the *claque*. The curtain was drawn and she appeared, to be welcomed with smiles that made the theatre glow. She danced, and rapturous applause cheered her to loftiest efforts. She curtseyed, and flowers and garlands covered her.

She came, she was seen, she conquered.

And then the delights, more intoxicating still, of the intermission.

"I quit the scene for my boudoir, whose silken splendor owes all its elegance to the taste and liberality of my kind director. What do you see, Mina, in its sparkling mirrors? What a gay, gallant, and graceful throng encircle me, occupying every chair, besieging every sofa! And have I not reason to be proud of homage from such a levee, representing the rank, the wit, the elegance of this brilliant capital —the white gloved denizens of the *avant-scènes,* whose bravo is the fiat of our scenic fate."

Although, in the very midst of it all, she tasted of sours as well as of sweets, for those Messieurs of the press often wrote rudely in order to dispel one's fanciful dreams, and so

"melt all down to the chilling reality of a helpless subjection to their invincible domination. Ah, these men of the press! The terror of their craft, doubtless they are meant to secure some good end, else why do they live and prosper?"

But still, in spite of it all, America beckoned insistently, and in December America seemed a little nearer, though no less strange. Miss Elssler imagined that it had its share of rivers, and mountains, and towns, and supposed that, with her usual activity in such matters, dear Mina had purchased a map with America drawn on it. "Do tell me something about it!" she begs. "I don't believe my stupid old school

master ever heard of it, for he never told me anything of it that I can recollect." And there was no information on the subject to be had in Paris, since there were some complacent Parisians who even doubted the existence of Germany, and every day she heard "some acquaintance ask of America, What's that?"

Not where is it, but what is it? *L'Amérique, qu'est-ce-que c'est que ca ?* How mortifying, but there is worse to follow. One day she had a new sensation, she saw an American, "of whose authenticity she can hardly doubt." They were rare, but this one seemed to be a genuine specimen. Of course people purporting to be Americans had been pointed out to her before—*regardez donc, Mademoiselle Elssler, un véritable Américain!*—but she had always taken them for Englishmen, and they were wonderfully alike, talked the same language, dressed similarly, and doubtless ate and drank after the same fashion. This person, it seems, was a soft mannered man, of most winning demeanor, and well bred in every word and look. If he was not a too fair sample of Americanism she would, she decided, have nothing to fear for her throat or her pocket. They had told her such terrible stories about Americans! How, she wondered, did they treat "us dancing things. . . ."

In January, 1840, she met another. She had been laying in "such a wardrobe of delicious costumes," upon her word, she had spent a third of her time lately in dressing and undressing. But then it was such a luxury to spend money in Paris, that paradise of women, whose brightest spirits were its dress-

makers. Such a consumption in satin shoes alone! She seldom, Mina must remember, used less than three pairs every night, and the slightest soil condemned them, and that upon the dirtiest stage in the world, purposely kept so to avoid slipping. . . . Between fittings, however, she met her second American and was most favorably impressed.

"I know you think me a very fastidious observer of men," she remarks, "and if, of the number who have flitted by me, you knew the very few that have not provoked indifference you would very likely be astonished." But this one was charming, and led her to believe that Americans entertained, and certainly manifested, a deference for her sex that must be founded on a higher appreciation of woman as such, and on a more genuine respect for their feelings and characters, than one was usually accustomed to meet with.

Encouraged by these manifestations, she sailed, in April, 1840, with what qualms may be judged from the following effusion:

"Great Western Steamer. Adieu, dearest Thérèse. I am drowned in sorrow. . . . . You know my rooted apprehension of the sea, that now rises on me almost like horror. . . . What a shock I had in going to view my cabin. I had figured to myself something like a good sized bed chamber, with tables and chairs (how should I know any better, who was never in such a place before?) but I was ushered into a small closet, and told I was to sleep, and likely eat, there for sixteen days to come. I declared that it was out

of the question, amid the laughter of all around me. . . . The steamer trembles as at the danger before it —the wheels begin to turn! Adieu, sister, in tears and sobs, adieu!"

And then, on May 3, the barbarous shore. "Look there, Mina, behold America!" The harbor of New York opened upon them—could anything in nature be more magnificent? Islands of the most picturesque beauty were scattered in every direction the eye wandered to. The city itself was an object of wonderful attraction. There was a lovely promenade called the Battery, adorned with splendid trees and pretty walks, and running from the water's edge, which might be considered the city's natural frontispiece, and nothing could be more strikingly beautiful to the eye of a stranger. . . .

She went ashore, and was pleasantly surprised at every turn. America, what's that—well, it was quite a place. She was greatly struck at first with the unexpected size and commercial opulence of the city; she observed quays lined with noble warehouses and fleets of fine vessels riding at anchor in front of them. And she was very much flattered, Mina may be sure, to find that her arrival was making a great sensation, "even down to those matter of fact creatures, the custom house officers, who treated all my parcels as sacred property." The freedom of the city was not being bandied about in the Forties, so that she did not have the pleasure of stopping at the City Hall. As it was, she mistook the building for the Park Theatre. As

for the houses, while she drove through the quiet Sunday streets, she found them of all possible sizes and colors, but generally well built and cheerful in aspect, and if the paving was not over smooth it was all very clean and nice. She did not mention any pigs. Perhaps even the pigs observed the two dollar fine for loafing on Sunday law.

But her first dinner astonished her outright. The table was actually most elegantly garnished with fine linen and beautiful glass, and "would you believe it—I was so positively assured by those who had been here that a napkin was not to be found in the country, that I had, consequently, brought some dozen with me. I found them useless." The impression grows on one that Miss Elssler must have been an extremely gullible young woman. One wonders what else she brought with her in those sacred parcels.

A little later, having taken several drives about the town, she was impressed by the width and beauty of many of the streets, and the striking elegance of many of the houses. And on Broadway, of which New York was so justly proud, she found shops that were well supplied with every variety of fine goods. Including table napkins! Commodious ferry boats rendered accessible to her the environs of the city, where the loveliest scenery abounded. In fact, she exclaims, "who could have imagined that such a city, so richly endowed in natural beauty and monumental splendor, could have existed in young, barbarous America?"

She went, finally, to the most important building

in New York—the Park Theatre—and was agreeably surprised at "the neat and elegant appearance of the interior, so strikingly in contrast with its truly contemptible aspect without." It had, when she saw it, four tiers of boxes that were all open in the style of English theatres, with the exception of three private boxes on either side of the second tier, and it was finished throughout in white and gold. The benches in the pit were not upholstered, but Mr. Forrest was playing upon its stage. . . .

5

Miss Elssler's success was immediate and complete. During her first engagement in New York she danced fifteen times, and brought in some $24,000 to the box office of which she retained $10,000 as her share—the start of that $85,000 fortune she took away with her from America. It was wrong, the New York *Evening Post* insisted, to call her a *danseuse.* It was the muse of motion that presided on Elssler nights, it was an exhibition of everything most graceful in motion, most rapturous in repose, most exquisite in attitude. It was the display of the most preëminent attributes that make the eye of man love to dwell on the unadorned human frame when in its perfect development. It was, to begin all over again, an exhibition of the most beautiful forms, the most exquisite attitudes that human limbs could assume. No wonder they stood in line, those white gloved dandies of the Forties.

For two years she went on tour throughout the

United States, and filled repeated engagements in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Havana. During the summer she recuperated at Saratoga and on Staten Island, and in the winter time she drove in a splendid sleigh behind four white horses, escorted by the entire community in jingling pungs and breaknecks. Hats were named after her, songs were written for her, and her statue was exhibited in New York. In Richmond she was received with cannon and tolling bells; in Boston she "danced the top stone onto the Bunker Hill monument"; in Baltimore the young fashionables dragged her carriage through the streets; and in Havana numbers of white pigeons "trained in such politeness," were let loose to bring her garlands of flowers.

Much of the "Elssler mania"—constantly, and universally expressed in packed houses, thunders of applause, and showers of roses—seems to have been due to her curtain speeches. From the time of that first night, when her "Thousand thanks!" took New York by storm, she never forgot that America enjoyed tears, broken English, and the hand on the heart.

In Boston, at the Tremont Theatre, in October, 1841, she addressed "her admiring and enthusiastic auditors, in her halting, delectable, broken English," in the following words, "so naïvely and sweetly uttered":

"Ladies and Gentlemen—I am very much bothered. I don't like to leave you now, for the last

time, and I am afraid to try your patience by a longer stay. Really, I don't know what to do—(Shouts of Stay, Stay, from all parts of the house.) I have a great mind to stay—shall I? (Yes, Yes, and great cheering.) Now remember, if you get tired of me it is your own fault."

She was, decidedly, a very great actress.

Reluctantly one leaves her in the wings of the Tacon Theatre in Havana, watching Mr. Sylvain optimistically *whitewashing* the arms, necks and legs of his brown skinned Cuban ballet girls as they file out onto the stage in La Sylphide. . . .

CHAPTER III

TIPPECANOE, AND TYLER TOO!

1

HEAVEN, and historians, alone know, now, what it was all about.

There had recently been a panic—two panics in fact, one in 1837 and another in 1839. Commercial houses on all sides were failing; banks were suspending; the States were rushing into bankruptcy; rent riots were occurring in New York; there was something deplorably wrong with the currency of the republic; the country was quite obviously going to the dogs. It was, at the time, all enormously alarming and vital. That no one, today, gives two pins about it is cause, perhaps, for optimism when present time problems boil over onto the national carpet.

Writing in his diary on January 1, 1840, Mr. Philip Hone found nothing better to say than that another year had passed, and that it would be well if black lines could be drawn around 1839 in the calendar. The year had been marked, it seemed to

him, by individual and national distress in an unprecedented degree, "the effect of improvidence and a want of sound moral and political principles on the part of the mass of the people, and bad government and a crushing down of everything good and great to subserve party objects on the part of the rulers."

To make matters worse, the Democratic President—Mr. Martin Van Buren—sat calmly, it seems, in his gilded palace in Washington throughout these calamities, eating expensive soup from a silver tureen with a gold spoon, and driving haughtily in between times through the streets of the capital in his maroon coach with outriders. Yes sir. And not only that, but, would you believe it, there were Royal Wilton carpets on the floor, and chairs costing $600 a set, and gilded mirrors the size of barn doors in his Blue Elliptical Saloon.

Congressman Ogle, of Pennsylvania, knew all about it. On April 14, 1840, in a speech which reads like a house decorator's catalog, he put it to the free citizens of this country to say whether they were disposed to maintain for the President's private accommodation A Royal Establishment at the cost of the nation. Would they—when it came to voting on the Appropriation Bill in a presidential year—longer feel inclined to support their chief servant in a Palace as splendid as that of the Cæsars and as richly adorned as the proudest asiatic mansion? Would they? The Whigs thought it highly improbable, and Congressman Ogle took out his notes.

"Let us," he suggested to the Democratic con-

gressmen who had not thought of doing so before, and showed very little inclination to do so then,

"let us survey its spacious courts, its gorgeous banqueting halls, its sumptuous drawing rooms, its glittering and dazzling salons, with all their magnificent and sumptuous array of gold and silver, crimson and orange, blue and violet, screens of Ionic columns, marble mantels . . . gilt eagle cornices, rich cut glass and gilt chandeliers . . . French bronze gilt lamps, gilt framed mirrors of prodigious size . . . mahogany gilt mounted and rosewood pianofortes . . . mahogany gilt bronze mounted secretaries, damask, satin and double silk window curtains"—Mr. Ogle had hardly begun—"Royal Wilton, and Imperial Brussels, and Saxon carpets, gilt and satin settees, sofas, bergeras, divans, tabourets and French comfortables, elegant mahogany gilt eagle mounted French bedsteads, gilt plateaus, gaudy artificial flowers, rich blue and gold bonbons, tambours, compotiers, ice cream vases, splendid French china vases, olive boats, octagonal bowls, silver tureens, boats and baskets of every rich work, golden goblets, table spoons, knives and forks. . . ."

Mr. Ogle talked for several hours, in a manner highly diverting to the Whigs and increasingly depressing to the Democrats, although at the moment probably neither group realised the effect which his oration was to have on the presidential contest then already under way. He had set out to make a party speech, he ended by issuing the one great Whig document of the campaign. In the meantime, "how do you relish," he appealed to his delighted col-

leagues, "the notion of voting away the hard cash of your constituents for silk tassels, galloon, gimp and satin medallion to beautify and adorn the Blue Elliptical Saloon?"

Before the day was over, and long before the speech was over, Mr. Ogle had put the Blue Elliptical Saloon irrevocably into national politics. He concluded on a note of high congressional oratory with the statement that if Mr. Van Buren chose to lay out hundreds of dollars in supplying his toilet with Double Extract of Queen Victoria, Corinthian Oil of Cream, Concentrated Persian Essence and Extract of Eglantine, it could constitute no valid reason for charging the farmers, laborers and mechanics of the country with bills for hemming his dish rags, for his larding needles, liquor stands and foreign cut wine coolers.

Mr. Ogle went home, feeling a trifle hoarse, no doubt, and Mr. Van Buren went to bed with the realisation that he had been made to appear somewhat ridiculous. Everybody laughed for a week. Double Extract of Queen Victoria!

Such a condition of affairs, even before Mr. Ogle had revealed it in all its sumptuous effrontery, had been intolerable. Down with the aristocratic, Anglomaniac Locofocos—so named from the time of their famous meeting when, the Whig landlord having turned off the gas, they were obliged to write their resolutions by the light of Locofoco friction matches. And down, particularly, with the despot Van Buren. In that clatterwhacking presidential campaign of 1840

the bulk of the nation was determined to vote for anybody—except Mr. Van Buren. The state of mind has been manifest more than once in American politics.

The anybody in 1840 turned out to be General William Henry Harrison—the defeated candidate of 1836—a gentleman from Ohio who had once won a battle. The Whigs, for their part, were determined to unite all factions—all the anti-renters, anti-slavers, abolitionists, conservatives, Webster-Whigs, Clay-Whigs, and all the other varieties of Whigs—and to win the election with a candidate who would satisfy all the groups, or at least antagonise as few of them as possible. Mr. Clay, the party favorite, the logical choice of Whiggery, had all the abolitionists and conservatives against him. Mr. Webster never had a chance, and knew it. After a round or two of complimentary ballots for Mr. Clay, the great Whig convention at Harrisburg nominated General Harrison and Mr. Tyler, and then listened to a portfolio full of speeches from the Clay men in which they explained at great length why they were in favor of Mr. Clay but had decided not to vote for him. It was a splendid moral victory for Mr. Clay, but the hero of Tippecanoe, and Tyler too, became the candidates of the Whig party.

2

The only thing which the Whig convention had neglected to do was to formulate a platform. In the midst of the general speech-making there had

been no time for, and, apparently, not the slightest preoccupation over, so insignificant a feature of the campaign. The deficiency was almost immediately supplied, however, by the Locofoco press itself, much to its subsequent dismay and mortification. The, as it turned out, fatal blunder was committed by a Baltimore paper which, having had its attention drawn to a remark concerning General Harrison made by a friend of Mr. Clay, decided that it would be the best joke in the world to publish the entertaining statement. Unfortunately the joke, while an excellent one, was on the Democratic party.

What Mr. Clay's friend had said, on hearing of the nomination, was that if General Harrison were given a pension of $2000 a year and a barrel of hard cider he would be perfectly content to spend the rest of his days in his log cabin, studying moral philosophy.

This appraisal of the Whig candidate, enlarged upon and sneeringly reproduced by the Democratic press, elected him. What the blue elliptical saloon might not have achieved, the log cabin accomplished. The inevitable interpretation attached to the Locofoco guffaws over this personal item was that General Harrison, because he was a plain man, and a poor man, and a plebeian, was not fitted to be President of the United States. All of the plain, poor, plebeians in America immediately became extremely indignant. As in the case of the "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion" episode, the damage was done. In vain the Democrats pointed out that the statement had

Designed & Lithogr by E. Weber & Co. Baltimore.

THE HARD CIDER QUICK STEP

Composed & Respectfully Dedicated to the

DELEGATES OF THE

GREAT WHIG CONVENTION

Held at Baltimore May 4th 1840

By

I. T. S.

Published by S. CARUSI Baltimore.

HARD CIDER

From a lithograph by E. Weber & Co.

emanated, not from them, but from the most select Whig circles. In vain they protested that, far from sneering at the General, or at any quality which he might represent, they had merely repeated his own party's estimate of him. The country would have none of their belated excuses.

What? Sneer at the General because he was willing to live in a log cabin; because he was satisfied to partake of simple fare, as symbolised by hard cider in contrast to Mr. Van Buren's imported wines; because he was man enough to toil on his farm with his own hands; because he was a poor but honest citizen and not one of the "fawning minions of power"—well, the country guessed not! As well sneer at the Liberty Bell or the Pilgrim Fathers. A log cabin—and why not? Hundreds of Americans lived in log cabins, thousands of Americans had been born in log cabins, millions of Americans who had done neither had no trouble whatever in becoming patriotically sentimental over log cabins. Log Cabins—Home Sweet Home—The Old Oaken Bucket—these things were sacred. The nation was mortally offended. The Democrats had trodden on America's most cherished corn, attacked America's most precious illusion, namely that one man is as good as another.

In vain, once more, the Democrats pointed out that General Harrison was not a poor man, that he seldom if ever drank hard cider, that he had no occasion to toil on a farm, that not by any stretch of the imagination could he be said to live in a log

cabin, since, quite evidently to anyone who cared to look, he lived in a fine residence surrounded by a two thousand acre estate—

"Fiddlededee!" the country replied to the Democrats, and believed all these things of its hero all the more firmly.

The Whig Log Cabin, Hard Cider campaign was under way, with a makeshift ticket, a fortuitous issue, and no platform whatever—but a contagious slogan was spreading throughout the land, and when America falls ill of a slogan nothing else matters.

3

The uproar began in the West. There were, of course, more log cabins in the West. At all events the West began to parade, and rally, and convene. In Columbus, Ohio, some twenty thousand people assembled from all over the State and marched eight abreast in a procession two miles long, carrying banners and transparencies—The Hero of Tippecanoe —The Farmer's President. Many of them had come in canoes and log cabins, mounted on wheels, and drawn by three and four pairs of horses. While the cabins trundled along the roads their escorts sat on the roof and drank hard cider. It must all have been extremely convivial and slightly befuddled. In Dayton, one hundred thousand came rolling in, and, after the cider had all been consumed, went rolling out again, looking for the next convention.

The contagion soon spread to the East. Rallies were held everywhere, attracting thousands of

citizens who might better have been attending to their own affairs. Sixty thousand paraded in Boston, sixty thousand more in Syracuse. The nearer the date of election approached the greater the rallies became, the more people abandoned their work entirely in order to take part in these perambulating demonstrations of Whig enthusiasm. In New York the call went out for a:

"Great Moral Meeting in the Park this afternoon. A mighty, multitudinous, moral meeting will be held in the Park this evening of all the people in this city who are in favor of political morality in the use of the ballot box at elections. It will probably be the greatest meeting ever held in New York. All the virtuous, moral, honest friends of General Harrison ought to attend, and join in sentiment with every party in preserving the purity of the electoral franchise sacred from the atrocious demoralisation of Wall Street. Meet—meet—meet, friends of the old honest hero of Tippecanoe, and declare that you are not implicated, nor will defend the horrible morals of the Wall Street cliques. Come forth—come forth."

Wall Street, Wall Street—horrible morals, atrocious demoralisation—what a familiar sound, away back there already in 1840!

In Baltimore, delegates from every State in the Union came together at the Young Men's Whig Convention, and paraded themselves dizzy, dragging log cabins through the streets and pushing "Harrison balls" before them. One of these was eventually

rolled to Philadelphia, where, most unfortunately for those concerned, it collapsed ignominiously in the midst of the procession, to the huge delight of onlooking Locofocos. Other Harrison balls were not so ill fated, however, and were rolled along the roads from town to town with a success presumably commensurate with the labor involved.

The feature of all these parades, of course, was the canoes and log cabins on wheels, but principally the log cabins. Tremendous affairs, some of them, with smoke issuing from a real chimney, and a coonskin on the wall, and a barrel of cider beside the door, and always the latchstring hanging out. Aside from these traveling cabins, these itinerant emblems on wheels, every town, every village, had its Log Cabin headquarters for its Tippecanoe Club, in which loyal Whigs wearing wide awake hats and Tippecanoe badges and handkerchiefs convened to sing Tippecanoe songs and peruse Tippecanoe literature—the Tippecanoe Text Book, the Log Cabin Song Book, the Harrison Eagle, and in particular a certain Mr. Horace Greeley's Log Cabin newspaper. In some of the city cabins, they also convened for the purpose of imbibing large quantities of Tippecanoe "cider," so that the Whig party found it necessary to remind its followers that Log Cabin Clubs must not be converted into "rum holes."

Throughout the country the cry was "Tippecanoe, and Tyler too!" and "Harrison, two dollars a day, and roast beef!"—a sequence of somewhat heterogeneous wishes showing the simplicity of human

desires in the Forties. Cider was the chosen beverage, the log cabin the cherished emblem, Tippecanoe the favorite name. Children screeched it over back fences and were christened with it, men swallowed it with their afternoon meal, women scrubbed it into their washing, darned it into their hose, rocked their cradles to its rhythm. Church bells chimed it, the wind rustled it in the leaves, birds sang it at sunrise. Out in the fields farmers cried "Go it Tip, Go it Ty" to their horses.

"Tippecanoe—Tippecanoe—
Tippecanoe, and Tyler too,
Tippecanoe, and Tyler too,
And with them we'll beat little Van, little Van,
And with them we'll beat little Van . . ."

Who could resist such a battle cry! Even in New York Mr. Philip Hone—watching the Whig processions parade the streets at night with music, and banners and torches, and commenting on the manner in which his party, "with more adroitness than they usually display," had appropriated to its own use the famous Locofoco taunt—remarks that on all the transparencies the Temple of Liberty is transformed into a hovel of unhewn logs, and the military garb of the General into the frock coat and shirtsleeves of a gentleman farmer.

"The American eagle has taken his flight which is supplied by a cider barrel, and the long established emblem of the ship has given place to the plough.

Hurrah for Tippecanoe is heard more frequently than Hurrah for the Constitution, and, whatever may be the result of the election, the Hurrah is heard and felt in every part of the United States."

4

The Locofocos, for their part, did not parade, or only very seldom and then in a supremely dignified, silk hatted manner. As one would expect from aristocrats who rode in maroon coaches and ate *pâté de foie gras* off gold plates—the fawning minions! It would obviously have been ill advised of them to cart replicas of Mr. Van Buren's gilded palace around the country, or brandish champagne bottles before the proletariat. And other guerdons had they none. What amusement they may have derived from the affair was obtained in solemn conclaves, in which earnest speeches were made about pressing affairs of state, to the accompaniment of Whig brass bands outside. Perhaps they passed resolutions calling for the hide of that Baltimore editor.

There is something immeasurably pathetic about those long faced, whiskered Democrats of 1840. They were ready to compete at the old stand, with issues, and platforms, and everything, while all their opponents thought of was to ride on top of log cabins and throw empty cider barrels around. They issued controversial propaganda, but their rivals merely set up theatrical props. They insisted on conducting a political campaign, when what the country was doing was following a traveling circus. Throughout the

year, the zeal of the Democrats burned while Whiggery fiddled.

"Look here!" the Democrats cried, "the Whig candidate is a clodpoll, a dunderpate, and a ninny-hammer—he ought to be called General Mum—he sits all day like a squash—he hasn't any platform—he doesn't know B from a bull's foot!"

"What do we care!" the Whigs replied. "Tippecanoe, and Tyler too—

"The people are coming from plain and from mountain,
To join the brave band of the honest and free,
Which grows as the stream from the leaf sheltered fountain,
Spreads broad and more broad till it reaches the sea.
No strength can restrain it, no force can retain it,
Whate'er may resist, it breaks gallantly through,
And borne by its motion, as a ship on the ocean,
Speeds on in his glory
Old Tippecanoe!
The iron armed soldier, the true hearted soldier,
The gallant old soldier of Tippecanoe!"

"Very well—what are you going to do about the currency?" the Democrats kept roaring. "What are you going to do about the national bank? What are you going to do about the panic?"

"Do?" the Whigs retorted. "PARADE—Tippecanoe, and Tyler too—

"Oh know ye the farmer of Tippecanoe?
The gallant old farmer of Tippecanoe?
With an arm that is strong and a heart that is true,
The man of the people is Tippecanoe. . . ."

"But, but—hey, come back here a minute—he isn't a farmer at all!" the breathless Democrats pointed out.

"Do tell!" the Whigs exclaimed, and were off again with the left foot—

"Let Van from his coolers of silver drink wine,
And lounge on his cushioned settee,
Our man on his buckeye bench can recline,
Content with hard cider is he.
Then a shout for each freeman, a shout for each State,
To the plain, honest husbandman true,
And this be our motto, the motto of fate,
Hurrah for old Tippecanoe!"

The Democrats tried a new tack.

"Keep it before the people," they thundered, "that General Harrison was a Federalist—that he approved of selling white men into slavery—"

"What's that to us?" the Whigs hardly paused to enquire, before intoning:

"What though the Hero's hard, 'huge paws'
Were wont to plow and sow?
Does that disgrace our sacred cause?
Does that degrade him? NO!
Whig farmers are our nation's nerve,
Its bone, its very spine,
They'll never swerve, they did not swerve,
In days of old lang syne.

"No ruffled shirt, no silken hose,
No airs does Tip display;

But like 'the pith of worth' he goes
In homespun 'hoddin-gray.'
Upon his board there ne'er appeared
The costly sparkling wine,
But plain hard cider such as cheered,
In days of old lang syne."

"Keep it before the people," the Democrats had to shout to make themselves heard above the racket, "that General Harrison is an abolitionist—keep it before the people that as a soldier he was a coward—"

"Bah!" the Whigs countered. "Keep it before the people that Mr. Van Buren lives in a blue elliptical saloon surrounded by flunkies—keep it before the people that he perfumes himself with Double Extract of Queen Victoria—keep it before the people that he has French tabourets in his parlor—step aside now and—

"Make way for old Tip, turn out, turn out,
Make way for old Tip, turn out!
'Tis the people's decree,
Their choice he shall be,
So Martin Van Buren turn out, turn out,
So Martin Van Buren turn out!"

It was not a presidential campaign, it was a contest between two modes of dress, two varieties of beverage, two styles of architecture. It was lost by an inch or two of type in a newspaper, won by miles of parades. It was a jubilee of popular prejudice on wheels, set to the music of atrocious ballads. It was

preposterous, and it was glorious sport. It was the Forties.

5

Mr. Van Buren only carried seven States.

The bewildered, and bitterly indignant, Democratic press wailed its loud misgivings over all this hornswogglery in gloomy, and not altogether unjustified, terms. The only hope was that the political buffoonery of 1840 would ever stand, solitary and alone, on the page of history, a damning stain on the brow of Federalism. No more might the world see coons, cabins and cider usurp the place of principles, nor doggerel verse elicit a shout while reason was passed by with a sneer.

"We have been sung down, lied down, drunk down!" So, dismally, they summed it up.

The Whig press, on the other hand, gave utterance to triumphantly sanctimonious outcries, the burden of which was that the people were free once more, that the election was a victory of principle over power, of liberty over despotism, of right and justice over wrong and oppression, of prosperity and happiness over widespread ruin and desolation. In short, that, to put it mildly——

"A great people have placed their seal of condemnation upon a band of the most desperate, aspiring, and unprincipled demagogues that ever graced the annals of despotism, a band of bold and reckless innovators calling themselves the democracy of the land,

at whose head was Martin Van Buren, a monarchist in principle, a tyrant and a despot in practice."

They had such a pleasant polemic style in the Forties!

In the midst of the commotion the Philadelphia *Public Ledger,* for its part, sourly observed that:

"millions of dollars will now change hands on election bets, millions of days have been taken from useful labor to listen to stump orators, and millions more to build log cabins, erect hickory poles, and march in ridiculous, degrading, mob creating processions; millions of dollars have been wasted in soul and body destroying intemperance, in paying demagogues for preaching treason and bribing knaves to commit perjury and cast fraudulent votes. However high the hopes inspired by the election of General Harrison, they will prove to be delusive."

And so they did, but not precisely in the manner anticipated. The new president was inaugurated on March 4, 1841, during the course of which ceremony he made a long speech—but not as long as it had been before Mr. Clay ran his blue pencil through it—full of allusions to Rome, to Greece, to the Swiss Republic even, and with never a reference to any of the issues of the day. One month later he was dead.

6

New York solemnised the event in characteristic fashion. It held a mighty, multitudinous, moral parade. They had been parading for a year, those

citizens of 1841, and the habit was strong upon them. And when, in the Forties, they set out to hold a parade, they did so earnestly and with considerable conviction. This one required three hours to swing into motion at the starting point in City Hall Park, "in one grand torrent of humanity forming a scene such as was never before witnessed on this continent"; it stretched unbroken from Chatham Square, through East Broadway, Grand Street and the Bowery, to Fourteenth Street and Broadway, "making a compact mass of four miles in length, flanked through its whole length by a mass of spectators of at least three times its numbers"; the head of the procession took some five hours to complete the circuit; over twenty thousand persons tramped patiently in its wake. And all in the midst of a miserable, bedraggling sleet storm.

One could not hope to improve on the New York *Herald's* account of this "Solemnisation of the Funeral Obsequies to the memory of Gen. Wm. Henry Harrison, Late President of the United States, by the People of the City of New York." It is the apotheosis of contemporary journalism. One can only regret the impossibility of reproducing it in its mournful entirety, diagrams, Funeral Urn, black borders and all.

"Saturday, the tenth of April, 1841," one learns, "was a solemn, a heart rending—a gloomy—and yet a happy day to the people of New York. Never was there such an occasion in her history as the one now passing before us. The solemnisation of the death of

a pure, benevolent, brave, patriotic Chief Magistrate has united all parties in one broad and deep mass of honest patriotism and love of country. While the people mourn they also rejoice—rejoice that when a patriot dies, all party opposition dies with him, and his virtues, like his soul, rise, purified, to heaven. . . .

"With these general reflections we shall now proceed to the particulars of the day. The Heavens were hung in black—gloom seemed to pervade the face of nature. Masses of clouds scudded mournfully across the lowering sky, and the smoke hung heavily above the city. At sunrise the flags of all the vessels were at half mast, as well as those of the Hotels, Theatres and all public places, and throughout the whole city men were seen busily engaged in hanging out crape, and other dark cloths, in festoons, while mournful emblems of grief and mortality met the eye in every direction." Broadway had "put on the weeds of woe," and the Bowery was "clad in the habiliments of profound grief."

By ten o'clock "the Societies, Trades Unions, Lodges of Odd Fellows, Fire and Military Companies with badges, ensigns and banners in mourning, were forming at their several rendez-vous and marching in a solemn procession towards the Park, around which the multitude was now collecting in dense masses, the whole forming at this early hour a grand and imposing spectacle, to see which every balcony in the vicinity was crowded.

"At twelve o'clock the procession began to form on the east side of the City Hall. At this time the crowd had become immense; from the lower end of the Park to the head of Chatham Square there was one dense mass of human beings of every age and sex. Every window was full, every balcony crowded, the roofs of the loftiest buildings covered, and

the sidewalks, streets and squares densely filled with spectators. At one glance the eye took in a view of over ten thousand exclusive of those forming the procession."

They were always extremely responsive to numbers in the Forties.

At the City Hall "the scene was of a most exciting character." The edifice was crowded with city officials, veterans of 1812, sailors who had served on the *Constitution* and under Perry, Congressmen, foreign Consuls, distinguished guests, and representatives from Brooklyn. One wonders how they all got in and, when the time came, how they all got out again. Mr. Van Buren, Mr. Butler, and one or two more, however, while present, "were too aristocratic to mix with the others and make themselves common; they therefore kept themselves in a private room." They were lucky to find one, but they might at least have shared it with the representatives from Brooklyn. But Mr. Van Buren does not ever seem to have displayed any of those genial little insincerities which democracies require of their public characters.

7

The parade was headed by the military. Five thousand of them, with three key buglers playing *Oft in the Stilly Night* and eight bands, one of them "in straggling order" and another "shabbily dressed but playing very well." German Rifles, Tompkins Blues, Hibernian Greens, Pulaski Cadets, Montgomery

Guards, Washington Greys, Mohegan Guards—companies in blue with red and white feathers, companies in green with red and white feathers, companies in blue with blue and white feathers, companies in blue with white belts, companies in red with no belts at all, companies in beaver caps, companies in green jackets, companies in light blue pants, companies in dark blue pants, companies in bright red pants. All very cold and wet.

"The Second Division, less regular, was, if possible, still more imposing. The Clergy, so numerous," seventy-two of them, "the United States Marines —whose officers looked noble—with their excellent band and exact discipline; the Golden Urn, protected by an Eagle and covered with crape, and inscribed with the names of the mighty dead," Washington, Hamilton, Lafayette and Harrison, "borne by the defenders of our noblest man of war; the horse, led riderless," by the General's negro valet; "the venerable pall bearers," in thirteen carriages; "the Ex-President," in a carriage with Mr. Butler and his child; "the official dignitaries of New York and Brooklyn—formed a scene of no common interest.

"In the Third Division, in solemn dignity," holding on to their top hats, "moved the higher dignitaries of the State and Nation and those whom the people have delighted to honor in times past, soldiers of the Revolution, members of the Society of Cincinnati, etc. The effect of all this, the banners shrouded, the staves of office with their golden heads covered with crape; and of so many of the eminent, the revered, the

honored, and the brave, joining in the funeral of the departed, without any regard to party, was sublime."

"After the civil officers and the magistrates had passed—a most miserable looking set, particularly the magistrates—came the long and splendid line of New York Firemen; there must have been in all about three thousand firemen, it was a splendid sight."

A mile of firemen.

There followed twenty-one other divisions—including the Masons and Odd Fellows in full regalia; the entire enrollment, apparently, of Columbia College, "who did not look like very wise men although some were very handsome"; the children of the Public Schools, who were "very noisy, wrestled, and cried out Hurrah for Tippecanoe," which was scarcely the thing to do, perhaps; the members of the Tammany Society or Columbian Order; all the Tippecanoe Clubs and Harrison Associations; the citizens of Brooklyn; the Benevolent Societies and the Irish Societies; the Typographical Society, whose members were "the most intelligent looking body of men in the procession"; the Butchers and Cartmen, followed by the Library Association and the Society of Letters; the Journeymen Tailors, preceding the American Academy of Fine Arts; the Paul Jones Parading Club, whose title is not without a certain significant charm; and the Captains of the Watch, the Watchmen themselves, and the Lamplighters.

So this splendid Pageant of National Mourning, becraped, beplumed and bedrenched, passed before

the eyes of admiring thousands, under a canopy of umbrellas. Perhaps some of them died of pneumonia afterwards.

One old lady, ninety years of age, followed the procession on foot the entire distance. She had been General Harrison's nurse.

CHAPTER IV

HOME, SWEET HOME

1

"HOME is the palace of the husband and the father. He is the monarch of that little empire, wearing a crown that is the gift of Heaven, swaying a sceptre put into his hands by the Father of all, acknowledging no superior, fearing no rival, and dreading no usurper." So one is informed by the Reverend J. N. Danforth, in *The Token of Friendship, or Home, The centre of the Affections,* published at Boston, in 1844.

> "The father gives his kind command,
> The mother joins, approves;
> And children all attentive stand,
> Then each, obedient, moves."

"*Sometimes* yield *your* wishes to *hers,*" Mrs. Emery writes in the same book, addressing husbands on their duty towards wives, and the italics are hers.

"She has preferences as strong as you, and it may be just as trying to her to yield her choice as to you. Do

not find it *hard* to yield *sometimes!* Think you it is not difficult for her to give up *always?"* And to wives she says, "Be submissive to your husbands. There must be a head, and God has wisely vested the authority in the husband. Let him see in you a gentle and submissive spirit; a willingness to give up to him, so that he shall have no fear of losing his authority, and you will find that here lies a wife's great power over her husband. . . . Be open as the day to his inspection, and never make an effort to conceal from him aught which it is proper he should know."

And, again, in the same volume, one learns that:

"Home is the empire, the throne of woman. Here she reigns in the legitimate power of all her united charms. She is the luminary which enlightens, and the talisman which endears it. It is she who makes 'home, sweet home. . . . ' Could you desire to witness a more interesting spectacle than a lady, with every other accomplishment, occupied with the welfare of her family, anticipating and dividing their duties, equally capable of entertaining in the parlor and managing in the kitchen?"

So it seemed, also, to Mrs. Hale, in *Godey's Lady's Book.*

"The outward world, for rugged toil designed,
Where evil from true good the crown has riven,
Has been to Man's domination ever given;
But Woman's empire, holier, more refined,
Moulds, moves and sways the fallen but God-breathed mind,
Lifting the earth crushed heart to hope and Heaven."

2

Further evidence is not lacking of the suffocating sanctity of the home in the Forties. Godey's Magazine is full of it.

"Where, I may be asked, where is the true sphere of woman?" Park Benjamin enquired, in 1844. "Where is the seat of her dominion? My answer is—HOME! Home which has been eloquently called the highest, holiest place in which human agency can act. Much to be deplored is any circumstance which draws a woman from this sacred sphere. I care not whether it be fashion or fanaticism, pleasure or politics. I would by no means have woman seclude herself from society, or fail to lend her charms to beautify human intercourse, but I would have her look there where her treasures are for the best gratifications of her heart. These are her true rights, her true duties, and there should be her supremest happiness."

So much for Margaret Fuller and Lucy Stone, and those other agitating ladies who were so soon to hold the first woman suffrage convention, at Seneca Falls, in 1848, under the leadership of Lucretia Mott, Martha C. Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

"As society is constituted," another writer in *Godey's* decided, "the true dignity and beauty of the female character seem to consist in a right understanding, and faithful and cheerful performance, of social and family duties. . . . There cannot, indeed, be much glory, but there is what we shall find a great deal better, much merit, and happiness, too, in that

continual round of duty which is to most females the chief circle of action."

And Miss Hale felt the same way. "For myself," she explained,

"I would assert nothing incompatible with the dignity or delicacy of my sex. I would not claim for it superiority of intellect. I would only urge that with proper cultivation the intellectual attainments of women may equal those of men. . . . Let me not be misunderstood. I speak not of what woman should be; I merely say what I think she is capable of becoming. I should be sorry, indeed, to hear one of my sex assert that her sphere is too tame a one for the energies of her moral and intellectual nature. . . ."

They had discovered, already in 1842, that:

"the great misfortune that lies in the path of highly cultivated women is the absence of active occupation for their mental energy. . . . Men have professions and offices; to them belong, by right of courtesy, all the activities and authorities of life. Authorship is the only accredited seat for a woman's intellect; and this, by obviating one evil, induces many others. The fever of unoccupied energy is quenched, but by and by the worse fever of sensitive ambition arises. . . .

"Where must the cure be sought?" the essayist asked. "In an inconceivably higher education of what may be called the sense of responsibility. Wherever genius indisputably exists in a girl, there let parents frankly acknowledge its existence, and on that admission ground a simple but serious inculcation of these doctrines—that to possess intellect is an accident, not

a merit; that it is by no means a novelty . . . and that superior knowledge is worthless without active virtue. Parents must learn to regard as nothing short of sin all efforts to stimulate a girl's mind for the gratification either of their vanity or hers. . . .

"The gifted girl feels man has taken the birthright and she fancies that for her no blessings are left —show her the grand fact that in most of the triumphs achieved by men she has shared in the purest form by having been their instructor, instigator or friend. Separate and individual triumphs are the lot of few women, and those few are rarely happier for them; but collateral triumphs she may have without number. How few have been the distinguished men who have not acknowledged that their deepest obligations have been to a wife, a sister, or, above all, a mother! Let the mind of every girl, especially of every girl of talent, be sedulously directed to this cheering view of female influence—to the beautiful and refreshing undercurrent which it may furnish in the troubled course of daily life. . . .

"As a general hint there was much wisdom in the advice given by an old mother to a young one: Stimulate the sensibilities of your boys, and blunt those of your girls."

In China they had a much easier way of dealing with girls—they simply threw the superfluous ones into the river. One scarcely knows where to begin to comment on these monumentally idiotic statements. But if Miss Hale was right—and she wrote in a magazine which was read by the entire cultured womanhood of America—if it was an indelicacy for woman to aspire to an equality of intellect with man,

then the essayist, also, was right. Close the doors, as much as possible, which could only lead to dissatisfaction and unhappiness; and when, by some unfortunate accident, a young woman persisted in being gifted, persuade her, by all means, to take it out in being a luminary and a talisman in the home, and to sit among her rocking chairs and crochet covered ottomans—surrounded by alabaster, stalactite and spar agate ornaments, shell vases, Etruscan vases and Gozzoli vases, gilded clocks, Florentine baskets, bronze animal groups, and paintings of Mount Vesuvius—and exhibit a gentle and submissive spirit to the husband and father whose palace was her empire.

On the whole, one is inclined to sympathize with the husbands, whose wives must, in many cases, have been unspeakably dull. But then, of course, the husbands were not obliged to remain at home, for were not theirs all the activities and authorities of life?

3

There is, in some ways, perhaps, no more illuminating revelation of the private life of the Forties than is contained within the covers of the volumes of deportment and polite behavior—frequently of French origin—which served to regulate the social intercourse of the period. And immediately one is struck by the astounding crudity of manners which must have prevailed in order to justify some of the admonitions which they found necessary.

It is one thing for the New York *Herald* to re-

mark, in one of its paternal editorials, that the leading characteristic of "fast" society in America, in 1848, is its intense vulgarity—

"loud talking at table, impertinent staring at strangers, brusqueness of manners among the ladies, laughable attempts at courtly ease and self-possession among the men—the secret of all this vulgarity in society is that wealth, or the reputation of wealth, constitutes the open sesame to its delectable precincts."

But one admits a certain surprise when one finds in a book of etiquette for young men that:

"the rising generation of elegants in America are particularly requested to observe that, in polished society, it is not quite *comme il faut* for gentlemen to blow their noses with their fingers, especially when in the street—a practice infinitely more common than refined";

and that they must never use their knives to convey their food to their mouths—"a besetting sin with Americans of all ranks."

And one confesses to a certain dismay when one reads that when the finger glasses are sent around one should:

"omit the disgusting foreign fashion of taking water into your mouth, rinsing and gargling it around, and then spitting it back into the glass. We have seen a young lady at a very fashionable house

SARATOGA SPRINGS

From a lithograph by Wm. Endicott & Co.

in one of our great cities pull a dish of stewed oysters close to her and with a table spoon fish out and eat the oysters one at a time, audibly sipping up their liquor from the side dish. We have seen a young gentleman lift his plate of soup in both hands, hold it to his mouth and drink, or rather lap it up. This was at no less a place than Niagara. . . . Nothing but sheer necessity can excuse any teeth picking at table."

One is less concerned over the warning to refrain from:

"balancing yourself upon your chair; crossing your legs; extending your feet upon the andirons; admiring yourself with complacency in a glass; folding your shawl instead of throwing it with graceful negligence upon a table; taking a person by the buttons or collar; whirling a chair around on one leg; and shaking with your feet the chair of a neighbor."

And one is rather entertained, somehow, by the precepts that "ladies should never dine with their gloves on unless their hands are not fit to be seen"; that if at dinner a lady "should raise an unmanageable portion to her mouth you should cease all conversation with her and look steadfastly into the opposite part of the room"; that in the case of a physician:

"everybody knows in what guarded terms he should disclose to the family a fatal termination to an illness if it has become inevitable; and everybody knows that however poignant may be the grief of parents, they ought never to let it appear in their conversations with

the physician that they consider him as the cause of their affliction";

and that:

"in the home, conjugal intimacy, it is true, dispenses with the etiquette established by politeness, but . . . in the presence of your wife or husband you ought never to perform those duties of the toilet which before anyone but yourself offend decency and cleanliness—such as washing the feet and cutting the nails."

In general, custom forbade a lady to make inquiries concerning a gentleman's health unless he were ill or very aged; all slang words were detestable from the lips of ladies, and they must never say snooze, pants, gents, seedy, rich for amusing, or "polking" for dancing the polka; no gentleman who really respected a lady would offer her anything more, as a gift, than "a bouquet, a book, one or two autographs of distinguished persons, or a few relics of memorable places"; young ladies would do well not to allow their names to be abbreviated "into such cognomens" as Kate, Madge and Nell, as in so doing they would lose "a particle of the respect" due them from gentlemen, and no young lady would address a gentleman by his Christian name unless he were a relation, because "it is a familiarity which he will not like"; in her intercourse with gentlemen a lady must take care to avoid all pecuniary obligations; all ladies must refrain from the meanness of asking an authoress to lend any book written by herself, as "it is her interest

and that of her publishers that a large number of copies shall be sold, not lent or given away"; and no gentleman must ever ask a lady any question about anything whatsoever.

If they followed the French rules of decorum young married ladies were at liberty to visit their acquaintances by themselves, but they must not present themselves in public without their husband or an aged lady. They were at liberty, however, to walk with other married ladies or with unmarried ones, while the latter must never walk alone, neither must they show themselves with a gentleman unless he were a relation or of respectable age. No lady must present herself alone in a library or museum unless she came there to study or work as an artist.

A presentation to a lady in a public ball room, "for the mere purpose of dancing," did not carry with it the privilege of claiming her acquaintance subsequently. And "if a lady waltz with you, beware not to press her waist; you must only lightly touch it with the open palm of your hand." But as far as Madame Celnart was concerned,

"the waltz is a dance of quite too loose a character, and unmarried ladies should refrain from it altogether both in public and private. Very young married ladies, however, may be allowed to waltz in private balls, if it is seldom and with persons of their acquaintance."

If, in 1844, one were "so unfortunate as to have contracted the low habit of smoking," one must prac-

tice it under certain restrictions, "at least so long as you are desirous of being considered fit for civilised society." One must never smoke in the streets, or in a theatre, and one must never be seen in "cigar divans" or billiard rooms. As for tobacco chewing, "it is an abominable habit, and the spitting consequent upon it has been a matter of grave comment by all foreigners. What an article is a spittoon as an appendage to a handsomely furnished drawing room!"

And when a man married it was understood that all former acquaintanceship ceased, "unless he intimate a desire to renew it by sending you his own and his wife's card."

4

In her home, a lady equally capable of entertaining in the parlor and managing in the kitchen found plenty to occupy her in the preparation of her two o'clock dinners—or her formal five o'clock functions at which she ladled out the soup in person at the table, and saw to the placing of the inevitable glass dish of cranberries as carefully as she studied that of her guests—and her eleven o'clock party suppers with their indispensable bowls of hot stewed oysters.

She took pride in her home made biscuits and cakes—her philpies, bops and zephyrinas, her bachelor's pone, sally lunn and economy cakes, her marvelles, cymbals, jumbles, and journey, or johnny cakes and all the other fifty odd varieties of cake listed in the cook book; she spent hours at her pickling and preserving, and in the manufacture of pastries and

pies, custards, puddings, jellies, and essences; she gave the final, personal touches to her trifles and flummeries, her blanc manges, whip syllabubs and floating islands.

She knew how to make currant wine, grape wine, cordials, shrubs, and spice brandy; and, without reference to the recipe, she put a quart of French brandy and half a pint of rose or peach leaves into a jar, allowed them to steep together, then drew off the brandy, threw away the old leaves, and added new until the brandy was strongly impregnated with the leaves, whereupon she turned off the brandy clear and used it to season cakes, puddings and mince pies. Or if it were ratafia, she soaked twelve hundred peach kernels in a gallon of brandy for several months, and then poured off the brandy, adding to it one quart of Frontignac wine, one quart of strong hyson tea, one pint of orange flower water, and three pounds of sugar.

Or perhaps she would be making hop beer, in which case her book told her to:

"put to six ounces of hops five quarts of water and boil three hours; then strain off the liquor and put to the hops four quarts more of water and a tea cup full of ginger, and boil the hops three hours longer. Strain, and mix it with the rest of the liquor, and stir in a couple of quarts of molasses. Take about half a pound of bread and brown it very slowly—when very brown and dry, put it in the liquor to enrich the beer. When the hop liquor cools add a pint of new yeast that has no salt in it. Keep the beer covered in a

temperate situation until it has ceased fermenting, which is ascertained by the subsiding of the froth. Turn it off carefully into a beer keg or bottles. The beer should not be corked very tight or it will burst the bottles."

And when there was a wedding she took twenty pounds of butter, twenty pounds of sugar, forty pounds of raisins, eighty pounds of currants, twelve pounds of citrons, twenty pounds of flour, twenty nutmegs, twenty glasses of wine, twenty glasses of brandy, two hundred eggs, some cinnamon, mace and cloves, and made a wedding cake.

5

On her honeymoon she probably went to the Cataract House at Niagara. In which case, in 1841, she was told that:

"this is the season when citizens and strangers, and young married folks, are getting ready to visit the great Falls of Niagara. Most of the pleasure of this delightful jaunt is lost by not knowing how to select the route so as to secure despatch, comfort and variety of prospect.

"Proceed direct, after you arrive at Albany, to Syracuse by railroad. This will occupy but eight hours. At Syracuse take the packet boats—by way of relief from car travel—from Syracuse to Oswego; the most beautiful scenery will reward your selection, and in five hours you are at Oswego. Here embark on board of one of the splendid steam boats, *United States* or *Saint Lawrence*—floating palaces.

After a plentiful repast and a sound sleep, at seven in the morning you will find yourself, refreshed, at Lewiston on the Niagara River, where there is a railroad and commodious cars waiting to convey you to Niagara Falls to breakfast. Thus, without trouble, delay, or any of the usual perplexities incident to travel, you arrive at the Falls in twenty-four hours after you leave Albany—and, what is more important, without the least fatigue."

And from New York to Albany she might, in summer, go up the Hudson by boat, and then travel by the Red Bird Line of coaches. Or she might go by boat to New Haven, then by rail to Hartford, then by stage to Springfield, then by rail again to Greenbush, and finally ferry across to Albany. Or she might prefer to take the boat to Bridgeport, and then proceed to Greenbush by the New York and Housatonic Railroad—in cars that resembled small omnibuses, separate ones for the ladies and gentlemen, with crosswise seats and a narrow corridor up the centre, in the middle of which they kept the stove in winter—trundling along the single track, crossing turnpikes under wooden arches on which was painted, "When the bell rings look out for the locomotive." In 1843, the remainder of the journey to Buffalo was easier already, as it was possible to go all the way by rail for ten dollars, with only six changes of cars in twenty-five hours.

If she went visiting, in the very early Forties, to Boston, for instance, she traveled by boat, rail and stage from New York to Springfield, and thence by

rail to her destination, or by boat and rail via Providence. A journey from New York to Philadelphia by rail and over two ferries required six hours. In fourteen hours, with a two-hour wait in Philadelphia, she could reach Baltimore. Richmond was thirty-six hours, Charleston eighty-eight hours, and Mobile one hundred and sixty-three hours distant from New York. A trip to New Orleans by way of the "West" consumed twelve days and six hours—New York to Baltimore by rail, fourteen hours; Baltimore to Columbus by rail, and Columbus to Wheeling by mail chariot over the Cumberland Road, forty-four hours; Wheeling to the Ohio side by ferry, and thence to Cincinnati via Columbus, fifty-nine hours including two stops of six hours each; Cincinnati to Louisville by boat, twelve hours; Louisville to Natchez by boat, one hundred and forty-nine hours; Natchez to New Orleans by boat, thirty hours.

Riding in the great Mississippi River steamboats which were at the height of their prosperity in this decade, four hundred and fifty of them in 1842, and representing a value of more than seven million dollars. In the *Yorktown,* perhaps, with her twenty-eight foot wheels, her four boilers and her forty private cabins. Or in the *J. M. White,* with her wheel beams set back and her record breaking run of three days, twenty-three hours and nine minutes from New Orleans to St. Louis—tearing along the river with the boilers at white heat from the pine and resin fuel, to beat another packet to the landing. Or, on the Ohio River, in the *Messenger,* in a tiny stateroom opening

onto the ladies' cabin, if possible at the stern "because the steam boats generally blew up forward."

"Nothing but a long, black, ugly roof," as Mr. Dickens saw it, "covered with burnt out feathery sparks, above which tower two iron chimneys and a hoarse escape valve, and a glass steerage house. . . . Within there is one long, narrow cabin the whole length of the boat, from which the state rooms open on both sides. A small portion of it at the stern is partitioned off for the ladies, and the bar is at the opposite extreme. There is a long table down the centre and at either end a stove. The washing apparatus is forward on the deck. . . . At each (of the meals) there are a great many small dishes and plates upon the table with very little in them; so that . . . there is seldom really more than a joint, except for those who fancy slices of beet root, shreds of dried beef, complicated entanglements of yellow pickle, maize, Indian corn, apple sauce and pumpkin."

If she had occasion to go from Harrisburg to Pittsburg, she traveled in a canal boat, "a barge," according to Mr. Dickens,

"with a little house in it, viewed from the outside, and a caravan at a fair, viewed from within—the gentlemen being accommodated as the spectators usually are in one of those locomotive museums . . . and the ladies being partitioned off by a red curtain."

There were three horses to draw the barge, and a very small deck space in which every one contrived to "lie down nearly flat" when the helmsman cried Low Bridge! The low ceilinged cabin contained a stove, a

row of little tables down both sides, and some thirty male passengers. On either side of the cabin there were three long tiers of suspended shelves with a sheet and a blanket apiece, for which the occupants drew lots at nightfall.

"As to the ladies, they were already abed, behind the red curtain . . . though, as every cough, or sneeze, or whisper behind the curtain was perfectly audible before it, we had still a lively consciousness of their society. . . . All night long, and every night, on this canal, there was a perfect storm and tempest of spitting."

There was a tin ladle chained to the deck, with which "those who cared about washing" fished water out of the canal and poured it into a similarly captive tin basin. There was also a jack-towel, and in the bar a mirror and a public comb and brush. For breakfast, dinner and supper there were tea, coffee, bread, butter, salmon, shad, liver, steak, potatoes, pickles, ham, chops, black pudding, and sausages.

At the foot of the mountains the canal stopped, and passengers were conveyed across by "land carriage," on the Portage Railway.

"There are ten inclined planes," Mr. Dickens found; "five ascending and five descending; the carriages are dragged up the former, and let slowly down the latter, by means of stationary engines; the comparatively level spaces between being traversed sometimes by horse and sometimes by engine power. . . . Occasion-

ally the rails are laid upon the extreme verge of a giddy precipice . . ."

And they were enormously, and justly, proud of it, and traveled by the thousand over it.

In the summer time, unless the Virginia Springs claimed her—the Warm, and the White and Grey Sulphur—she went with her whole family to a watering place—to Nantucket and to the Ocean House at Newport, to Ballston Spa and Sharon Springs, to stay at the Pavilion House in "the most exclusive summer resort in the country," and to Saratoga.

"Beautiful Saratoga! Cradle of fashion and intrigue! Rendezvous of lacqueys and jockeys! Seraglio of the prurient aristocracy! Realm of a hundred queens! Here in thy wild groves, and here amid thy waterfalls, poets would love to live and die."

So, in 1848, the correspondent of the New York *Herald* described it.

"The amusements in which visitors indulge with great animation are riding, walking, bowling at ten pins, gunning, yachting, angling, dancing, carte and tierce, billiards, whist and match-making . . . all very interesting and innocent. The ladies occasionally have a game at battledore, and the children trundle their hoops in the beautiful courtyard of the United States Hotel,"

the great gathering place for those who were not quite prominent enough socially to feel at their ease

at the Congress Hall, and who did not care for the quieter atmosphere of the Union Hall.

A festive hostelry at which every Thursday evening there was a hop, and every Friday evening a ball, and every other evening except Sunday a dance in the drawing rooms. A resort whose inmates spent the day in drinking the Congress Spring water and propelling themselves in a hand car around the circular railway from sunrise until seven; breakfasting from eight until ten; visiting the Hamilton and Flat Rock Springs, and walking, riding and driving from ten until two; dining, noisily and hurriedly, from two until four; gossiping on the piazzas all the rest of the afternoon; taking tea at seven; and then dancing, and watching the conjuror, or the ventriloquist, or the players, and making love in the moonlit gardens until bed time.

All for two dollars a day. . . .

6

On his first rising, one learns from Madame Celnart, the correct dress for a gentleman was a cap of cotton or silk, a morning gown, or a vest with sleeves.

"For a lady, a small muslin cap, a camisole, or common robe. It is well," she adds, "that a half corset should precede the full corset, for it is bad taste for a lady not to be laced at all. The hair papers which cannot be removed on rising, because the hair would not keep in curl till evening, should be concealed under a bandeau of lace."

She probably soaked it in Dr. Roley's Brazilian hair curling liquid, and washed it in Guerlain's lustral water, while her husband was treating himself with Rowland's essence of Tyre, or Jones's oil of coral circassia, and anointing his locks with bear's grease, bull's marrow, or macassar oil, balm of Columbia, bandoline, cream of lilies, or pomatum in brown, black and auburn sticks.

And while he was shaving with Lubin's almond paste, or Ring's Verbena, or Henry's Chinese cream, she performed her ablutions with Brown's Windsor or Piver's soap, and improved her complexion with esprit de cedrat, eau de Botot, or sirop de Boubie, with blanc de neige and citromane, or, if necessary, with Micheaux's freckle wash. They both cleaned their teeth with Pelletier's odontine and elixir, or with orris tooth paste, after which he was ready for a sniff of Old West India bay water, while she sprinkled herself with her favorite perfume or extract—bergamotte, frangipane or patchouly; caprice de la mode, bouquet de Victoria, Portugal water, or honey amber; chypre, moussaline, reseda, or muguet; all the compounds of cinnamon, lard, sassafras, and calamus, cashoo, fennel and coriander, ambergris, musk, civet, and spermaceti, daffodil, heliotrope, orange, and mignonette, rosemary, rue and thyme, chamomile, melilot, juniper, marjoram, lavender, tansy, vervain and mugwort, balsam of Mecca, balm of Gilead, storax, labdanum, and mastich, which her druggist was always preparing for her.

And then, for a while, they were through with the

cut glass jars and bottles, and put them back with the Preston salts, and the carmine lip salves, and the clove anodyne, with the pearl powder, the attar of roses and the spirits of vinegar, and with the corn rubbers and tongue scrapers. . . .

And when, at last, they appeared, ready for the street, he would be wearing a high collared coat, a short waisted, roll collared waistcoat, tight fitting trousers strapped under the foot—or, later in the decade, very wide ones in broad plaids—a stylish chapeau of beaver, and a smart, black silk cravat, tied in intricate knots around his high, stiff, white shirt collar. Her front hair would be in long ringlets or in braided bands, and her back hair coiled up in braided figures of eight, under a bonnet of pale pink satin, perhaps, with a crown trimmed with ribbon descending low in front on the right side where it was caught with aloe and velvet leaves, finished off with a band of ribbon in the centre of the curtain; or a drawn capotte of sulphur colored crape trimmed with lilac ribbons, ornamented with a plume of white willow feathers drooping to the left side; her hands in long, black, silk mittens with velvet cuffs; and her dress, depending on the hat, of satin, possibly, faced with velvet cut in rounded points, the body high up to the throat where it was finished by a velvet collar, the sleeves tight, and ornamented at the top with velvet epaulettes.

If there were children along, the boys would be in short jackets, with the hair parted well on one side, and the little girls would have theirs brushed straight

back and kept in place by springs of steel covered with velvet, most of it hidden, in any case, by a coal scuttle bonnet, and under their very full little dresses they would be wearing pantalettes of cambric muslin edged with needlework.

7

The wardrobe of a lady of fashion of that period took up a great deal of room in her closets. The gentlemen were bad enough with their high hats, and great surtouts, and fancy waistcoats, and Bluechers and Wellingtons, and drawers full of cravats, and stocks, and neck cloth irons; but a chapeau of pale velvet with a fulling of lace on the inside descending in long lappets, and decorated with saule plumes, and bonnets of drawn lace surmounted by wreaths of roses, and white velvet turbans for the theatre, fringed with gold—these could not be pushed carelessly back on the shelf. And her full, flounced dresses in contrasting bareges, grenadines and silks—fawn over pale blue glace, stone colored damask over violet—her mousselines, and tarlatans, and jaconets, lawns, cambrics and printed muslins—these must be hung with care on her hooks. And then space must be found for her velvet, satin, brocade, and embroidered merino pelisses; for her voluminous cashmere, moire and lace trimmed India muslin capes; for her pelerines and cardinals of velvet and watered silk, which must *never* be of the same material as her dress. And her bureau was filled with fine cambric handkerchiefs, with innumerable pairs of white kid gloves trimmed with quillings of

satin ribbon with long floating ends, with saule and marabout feathers for her hair, and with delicate Brussels and Honiton lace.

In summer, too, what a collection of boxes she was obliged to take with her to Saratoga—her white poux de soie hats trimmed with green ribbons and lilac branches, her paille de riz bonnets with the deep, ear confining brims, all the fashionable Gimp, Leghorn, Coburg, and Jenny Lind models of her day; her parasols of shot silk, with the fringeless, colored borders lined with white Florence; her cambric and muslin dresses with the small bishop sleeves; and her countless needle work chemisettes.

And her riding habit, with all its accessories, in which she must have looked surpassingly bewitching.

The hair, first, drawn up closely leaving a single tress in front of the ear, or in "gently flowing curls which are more piquant and becoming." A plain, black, military, cloth cap confined under the chin by a ribband, or an Oakford pattern Spanish hat, with a green veil "to preserve the complexion in the hot sun and open air"—the fragile, white complexion of the Forties. Buff kid gloves from Beebe and Costar and plain, linen wristlets turned back over the cuffs. Showy buttons, but not too large, of gold, preferably, or jet, glass or chenie. A chemisette of linen or fine muslin, with the collar turned down over a checked silk necktie, ornamented with lace ruffles "graced with a small breast pin" or three plain studs.

Then the habit itself—of royal blue, rifle green or blue black broadcloth or cashmere—"the bodice

A FASHION PLATE OF THE PERIOD

From Godey's Lady's Book

always plain behind, fitting tight to the bust and connecting in front with buttons and buttonholes. The skirt very full, considerably longer than the skirt of walking dresses, with the slash in front of the left hip. The sleeves tight and plain, the cuffs without ornament. The collar of velvet, open half way down the bust. The bodice fastened with nine buttons, and a row of fifteen placed on each side, curving to the shape. The vest always of some light fabric, usually buff cassimere owing to the rich contrast that color makes with gold buttons, of which a row of fifteen is worn on the vest. The flaps of the vest attached to the bodice on the under side at the seams, and a separate rolling collar." Or the Amazon habit—

"fitting close up to the neck and having a small jockey skirt attached to the waist. A single row of fifteen buttons in front, several of which are usually kept unfastened to relieve the corsage by showing the chemisette underneath."

And a riding crop, and a groom to hold her horse, and a footman to hold her foot. . . .

8

But it was probably in the evening, after all, at soirées and balls, that she was at her loveliest.

With her hair dressed with roses and birds of paradise; ornamented with diamond headed arrows, or strings of coral, or a little toque festooned with pearls, and a high backed comb; or with a rouleau of velvet wound in gold gimp, and two marabout feathers

tipped with pink or silver dust on one side or; "in bandeaux, a little frizzed inside, and the back coiled up in thick rouleaux like cables, with two branches of the pink acacia drooping at each side of the face"; or, again,

"in bands, part of the back hair forming a braid and the remainder in ringlets falling at each side of the neck. A puffing of geranium ribbon intermixed with the back hair, and a rosette bow of the same placed immediately below the left ear. Festoons of pearls depending from the braid at the back falling over the front of the hair."

She sometimes borrowed the festoons of pearls, but the hair coiled up in thick rouleaux like cables was usually all her own. . . .

And then, perhaps, a dress of pink satin, the corsage—

"very much in the style of a corset, fitting the shape as tightly as possible, with a long point and three seams in front. The corsage, heart shaped, sloping downwards from the shoulders both at back and front. The sleeves tight and very short, and without shoulder straps, trimmed with two quillings of satin ribbon and a small bouquet of three feathers in front of each arm. The skirt ornamented with rows of the same bouquets of feathers, and a similar branch in front of the corsage."

Or a ball dress of white gros de Naples,

"the corsage very low in the neck, tight to the bust, and finished to a point with lace and a stomacher of the

same. The sleeves very short and puffed, with a bouillon at the bottom. The skirt ornamented with rows of pearls and small bows and tassels."

And then she danced, in her feathers, and pearls, and tight fitting corsage, and occasionally she fainted. . . .

9

"Whoever goes to parties eats too much trash of all kinds—oysters and ice cream—cold tongue and cream kisses—sugar plums and celery—drinks too much brandy, hock, sherry, madeira, and champagne. What is the cure? Leave off, if you will, and if you will not, then take a tablespoonful of Dr. Spolen's Elixir of Health before you go to bed."

Or a little of Sebring's cordial for indigestion, or Hutching's stomach bitters for dyspepsia and "night sweats." But aside from that, they must, judging from the medicaments which filled their medicine chests in the Forties, have suffered habitually from some extraordinary ailments. For, mixed in with such ready reliefs as Whitwell's Opodeldoc, for rheumatism, sprains, chilblains, and cramp, and Dr. Taylor's balsam of liverwort, for coughs and pains in the chest, and Roussel's Amandine, for the prevention and cure of chapped hands, one comes across Sherman's Worm Lozenges, for instance, and learns that—

"Few are aware how many diseases arise from worms. They are not confined to children, but thousands upon thousands, nay, millions of adults suffer

and even die from their effects and never suspect it. How many have felt dizzy, restless, feverish at night, or suffered from any of the following symptoms—an obstinate cough, pain in the joints or limbs, bleeding at the nose, headaches, vertigo, torpor, disturbed dreams, sleep broken off by fright and screaming convulsions, thirst, pallid hue . . . itching of the nose, griping or swelling of the stomach, nausea, squeamishness, voracity, leanness, and itching of the arms—without any relief because they do not go to the root or cause of all these symptoms? Unless they can reasonably account for them some other way, depend upon it, worms are working the destruction of your health. How many children have fits, convulsions and die, and all from worms. . . ."

Thousands upon thousands, nay, millions, apparently.

And so many other instantaneous remedies for so many alarming and unusual debilities. Dr. Wheeler's universally celebrated Balsam of Moscatello, "the most valuable vegetable preparation ever discovered for the cure of cholera morbus and the dangerous effects of drinking cold water when overheated." Abernethy's botanical pills, for curing irritation of the kidneys and "diseases of a delicate nature." Moffat's universal vegetable life pills and Phoenix bitters, "the most effectual remedy extant for the cure of all and every disease to which man is subject," from scrofula to "habitual costiveness." Thorn's compound extract of cobaila and sarsaparilla, for various ailments the only one of which one dare mention is "scorbutic eruptions." And Roake's iodine liniment,

guaranteed to cure the worst possible cases of every known complaint, from king's evil to diseases of the spine, including croup, chilblains, bunions, pimples, and barber's itch.

10

In 1848, the New York *Herald* commented editorially on the prevalent irregular practice of medicine, and remarked that Dr. Brandreth, of Brandreth's Pills, was living in a "palace" at Sing Sing—his own private palace, that is to say—while Dr. Moffat, of Moffat's Life Bitters, owned a magnificent house on Broadway and made sixty thousand dollars a year, and Dr. Townsend had become a millionaire with his sarsaparilla.

But what, to a modern reader, seems more incredible, is the amount of space in the advertising columns of the *Herald*—whole pages at a time in some cases—devoted to these quack medicines, and to the mutual recriminations indulged in by their proprietors, and the extremely unreticent wording of their notices.

One reads, today, with considerable astonishment, after all, of the Lucina Cordial, or Elixir of Love, for curing, among other things, incipient consumption and barrenness; of the Portuguese Female Pills, "the wonder and admiration of the world, which, however, must not be used during pregnancy as they are certain to produce miscarriage during that period"; of Dr. Convers's Invigorating Cordial for Genital Debility, offered as a specific for "various deplorable

affections" which are listed, together with their causes, in the blandest detail, with the added advice that "young men . . . whose matrimonial alliances have not been productive of those happy results which should attend the connubial state will perceive this advertisement treats of an important subject to them"; of Dr. Convers's Minerva Box, at five dollars a box, of which nothing more can be said in these pages except that "strangers sojourning in the city should secure the box before leaving . . . and persons in the country forwarding five dollars . . . will have the box sent to them without exposure"; and of the Married Woman's Private Medical Companion, a book the various subjects treated in which—

". . . are of a nature with which every female, either married or contemplating marriage, should become conversant, especially the great French discovery, to ignorance of which the life of many a wife has fallen a sacrifice. . . . Every husband and every father, as also every young man contemplating to become one, will here find suggestions which, once possessed, no pecuniary consideration will induce them to part with. Their own happiness, the future happiness of their children, depend upon being possessed of the important secrets contained in this work. How true it is that knowledge is power; how often it is that what we acquire for one dollar we would not part with for thousands."

How true, indeed—and how startling to a mind accustomed to the rigorous censorship of the present age, for it was birth control which they were advocat-

ing so openly, and the advertisement sections were full of it. In such inscrutable cycles does the meat of one era become the poison of another. But it is scarcely in the religious, prudish Forties that one would have looked for such public tolerance of so controversial a subject. The notices published in the *Herald* by Madame Restell were perhaps the most elaborate, of which the following is a typical sample—

"Important to married females—Madame Restell's Preventive Powders. These valuable powders have been universally adopted in Europe, but France in particular, for upwards of thirty years, as well as by thousands in this country as being the only mild, safe and efficacious remedy for married ladies whose health forbids a too rapid increase of family.

"Madame Restell, as is well known, was for thirty years Female Physician in the two principal female hospitals in Europe—those of Vienna and Paris—where, favored by her great experience and opportunities, she attained that celebrity in those great discoveries in medical science so specially adapted to the female frame for which her medicines now stand unrivalled, as well in this country as in Europe. Her acquaintance with the physiology and anatomy of the female frame enabled her—by tracing the decline and ill health of married females scarce in the meridian of life, and the consequent rapid and often apparently inexplicable causes which consign many a fond mother to a premature grave, to their true source—to arrive at a knowledge of the primary cause of female indisposition—especially of married females—which in 1808 led to the discovery of her celebrated Preventive Powders. Their adoption has been the means of preserving not only the

health but even the life of many an affectionate wife and fond mother.

"Is it not wise and virtuous to prevent evils to which we are subject by simple and healthy means within our control? Every dispassionate, virtuous and enlightened mind will unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative. This is all that Madame Restell recommends, or ever recommended. Price five dollars a package, accompanied with full and particular directions."

In another notice Madame Restell admitted that at the time of the first announcement of her powders in America they had "elicited some strictures from the press as to the propriety and moral tendency of their introduction," but they had proved so salutary subsequently that there was no longer any objection to them. Nevertheless, in 1841, Madame Restell was arrested for malpractice, with a resultant scandal concerning which the *Herald* reported that—

"Her practice was immense and among all classes of people, and she has now between five and six hundred letters, many of them from ladies in the highest circles of fashionable society. . . . We regard the arrest of this woman, and the disclosures consequent upon it which must follow, as an interposition of Providence to crush the whole corrupt fashionable society of this city to atoms. Madame Restell has been an accomplice with the demoralised portion of society in violating the laws of God and man."

But later on in the decade Madame Restell's notices were still appearing.

Home, sweet home. . . .

CHAPTER V

CLOTH, EXTRA GILT

1

In 1848, after reporting the fact that there were offered at auction to the book trade that year one hundred and eighty thousand school books, thirty-two thousand juveniles, thirteen thousand moral and religious works, eleven thousand volumes of poetry, six thousand books of fiction, and five thousand works on phrenology, the New York *Herald* printed an editorial on Trashy Literature.

"Our pious principal booksellers," it remarked, "have been for some time past engaged, on Sundays, in praying to God and singing psalms, and on other days in printing and publishing parcels of vile and immoral literature. This species of literature is actually unfit to be read; we allude to the productions of Bulwer, *Dickens* and others in England"—the *American Notes* had not yet been forgotten, of course —"and those of Sue and others"—presumably Dumas—"in France; all of which are abominable trash and hardly worth the paper on which they are printed. . . . We venture to say that there is not one

of those authors who could write a respectable, readable, pithy and sensible leading editorial for a newspaper. . . . It is a libel on the spirit of the age to issue such works in a country like this. Our highly respectable booksellers and publishers are serving the devil better than the devil was ever yet served. One day to God and six to Satan is doing very well to demoralize the rising generation."

Perhaps the writer of the editorial preferred such publications as *The Rich Men and Women of Brooklyn,* a roster of suburban opulence; or *The Treasury of Knowledge and Library of Reference* in three volumes, containing among other useful chapters a Collection of One Million Facts, Sketches of the Literary History of the Jews and a Table of Canals, Railroads and Battles Fought in North America; or

"Love! Love! Love! Just published, the third edition of that interesting little book entitled *The Art of Love, or How to Woo and How to Win,* from the celebrated writings of Ovid, Chaucer and Dryden, translated from the French, with plates. Contents—The Art of Love, Court of Love, History of Love, Remedy for Love. In the first part the author lays down the rules to be observed in Courtships, and also gives instructions to ladies how to make themselves beloved, with several other interesting chapters on this pleasing subject."

Unless—since it presented "nothing of an immoral character or tendency, or to which the most fastidious could object"—the editor's library already contained *The Book of Courtship, or Hymeneal Preceptor,*

"a preparatory love school for young ladies and gentlemen; also *The Lover's Own Book, or Mirror of the Soul,* by Amator. These books are handsomely printed on fine white paper and put in a neat cover. No young lady or gentleman should be without them, as much valuable information may be gathered from their pages on the all important subject of Courtship. The young ladies and gentlemen are in raptures about this truly valuable little book, and some forty thousand copies have already been sold."

2

But the *Herald* was right. They were reading an enormous amount of trash in America, in the Forties. Sentimental, romantic, adventurous trash, staggering pompously on stilts through freshets of tears, much of it native and a great deal of it imported from England in paper covers. *Kate Walsingham* and *Who Shall be Heir?* by Ellen Pickering; the works of Maria Edgeworth, Mary Howitt—*Hope on, Hope ever, Strive and Thrive*—and Charlotte Elizabeth—*Humility before Honor, Backbiting* and *The Wrongs of Women;* and a whole shelf full of novels, such as *The Drooping Lily, Roxabel* and *Caroline Mordaunt,* by Mrs. Sherwood. *Percy, or the Old Love and the New,* by the author of *The Henpecked Husband,* in which "a sound and healthy moral is elucidated through the medium of an interesting fiction, and even in those pages where the author indulges in a comic vein, he has a stern and important purpose in view," and without a stern and important purpose, all was,

of course, lost; and *Guilford, or Tried by His Peers*—

"Book One. The first leaf in the life of Guilford. Meeting of light and darkness. The false and the true blood. Book Two. Favoring gales fill Guilford's sails, but the price of the wife shall yet be demanded and paid. Book Three. A sparrow shall not fall without its notice, neither shall Guilford. The following fine piece of descriptive writing is a sample of the author's power:

"Guilford stood with his left hand clutching the table, his right feeling about his breast, his eyes fixed grimly upon his brother. His face, and brow, and lips were white, and the muscles of his mouth working as if each member was alive. He stood thus, gazing upon the group with a bitter expression, and when all was still he said in a voice so low that only those who were nearest him heard what he said—

" 'Then Drysdale is my brother—the heir!'

"He could barely keep his legs; it had mustered all his faculties to pronounce what he had, and had nearly failed at that; and then awful was the change that came upon his features. The little tuft upon his chin glowed in fire, his hair moved as if it had life. All the paleness, all the unnatural, deathly pallor, was gone. His eyes looked like two balls of blood and seemed shooting from their sockets, the bloody witnesses of the struggle within.

" 'Then Drysdale is my brother—the heir!' he repeated, and he fell back, never to rise again, clutching the air as he descended."

The list grows. *Belle Martin the Heiress, Riches have wings,* and *The Amber Witch, or Mary*

Schweidler; Diving Nell, or the Doom of the Friendless, a romance of New York by the author of *The Orange Girl of Venice;* and *La Bonita Cigarera, or the Beautiful Cigar Vender,* a tale of New York. A typical paper backed work of very slight literary merit, hardly more than a scenario with incidental dialogue, in the customary ten chapters which leave one wondering which were the harder fate, the reader's or the author's. As a sample, however, of the current "penny dreadful" it is not without interest.

Almost at once Herman de Ruyter, the sixteen year old son of a convicted criminal, comes bursting into his mother's room.

"Hide me, Mother, I am pursued. . . . The police hounds are after me! I must be secreted!"

She does so, in the inevitable secret closet, and says to the police "I will open the door, but whom do you seek, coming in this loud manner to a poor widow's house?" But the police, after nearly setting fire to the house, find Herman, and he is sentenced to eight months on Blackwell's Island for stealing a watch. Four nights later, he reappears in his mother's room, carrying in his arms a young girl of ten.

"Whence have you taken this trembling dove?" Mrs. de Ruyter demands to know, not unreasonably.

Well, it was a long story, requiring several chapters of retrospect and the introduction of a great many shady characters, members of the gang of thieves with whom Herman had become associated. He had, it seems, escaped from prison and broken

into a private residence with a fellow burglar, when, upon the arrival of the watchmen, he had been hidden in some recess of the house which sheltered her by Cecilia, the beautiful orphan. When, finally, she was preparing to let him out of the garden some of the gang had tried to kidnap her, for reasons which remain as vague as the paragraphs which explain them.

"Demon, quit your hold or I will put my knife into your heart!" Herman exclaimed—for he was a good lad at bottom—and took Cecilia to his mother's house in a hackney cab.

Whereupon the author begins chapter ten by remarking "We are now to take our readers forward over a lapse of time embracing nearly seven years. During this period many events of interest connected with this tale and instinctively associated with the characters acting in it have transpired." But before going forward the author has some further interesting observations of his own to make.

"And here, in passing," he writes, "let us be suffered to allude to a fault with which many of our kind and considerate readers have charged us—that we crowd our events too closely in at the end, and make one chapter, the last, do the work of ten. To this charge we plead guilty, and at the same time say very frankly that it is out of our power to help it.

"The fashion of books has changed, and the short novel for a shilling York has usurped the place of the two volume duodecimos which used to sell at the dignified price of twelve York. Nothing, says the

publisher, will sell for more than ninepence, and to a ninepenny cut the author must treat his readers. So, dear reader, if our stories wind up too roundly at the finale of the tenth chapter, bear in mind that ten chapters makes a modern novel, neither a line more or less."

And so, he might have added, authors of the day wrote nine chapters in the meandering style of long novels and then crammed all that was left of the story into the tenth. A more intelligent distribution of the material did not come, apparently, with a ninepenny cut. In the present case, in a series of hasty biographical paragraphs, one learns that Herman and Cecilia grew up, that they loved each other as brother and sister, that Cecilia obtained employment in a cigar shop where she was known as the beautiful cigar vender, and that she suddenly disappeared one night and was never seen again. And if one wishes to know more about her one may read *Herman de Ruyter, or the Mystery Unveiled,* beginning the following week. . . .

And the list seems to have no end. *The Fatal Feud, or Passion and Piety; Ellen, or Forgive and Forget; For Each and for All, or Laetitia and Mary; the great Secret, or How to be Happy; Allen Lucas, or the Self-made Man;* that whole category of title pages which Herman Melville was burlesquing in his *Mardi,* when Babbalanja went down into the catacombs to see Oh-Oh's manuscripts—"The King and the Cook, or the Cook and the King; The Buck; The Belle; Hope for none; Fire for all; Sour milk for the

young, by a dairyman; King Croko and the Fisher girl; Suffusions of a lily in a shower; and A most sweet, pleasant and unctuous account of the manner in which five and forty robbers were torn asunder by swiftly going canoes"; *Nellie, the Ragpicker's Daughter; The Gambler, a Policeman's Story; Hoboken,* a romance of New York; *The Diary of a Hackney Coachman,* "a story full of wild and fearful incident"; *The Drunkard's Daughter;* and *The horrors of Delirium Tremens.*

A most extraordinary production, the latter, by means of which, in some five hundred painfully autobiographical pages, the author endeavored solemnly to establish the existence of devils, fallen angels and evil spirits. For having, as he confesses, gone repeatedly for several days at a time without being perfectly sober, he began to hear things, and to feel things, and to see things. For weeks on end, he was surrounded and pursued by extremely profane devils who could "tell more about hell in three minutes than a human being could in three hours." He saw a number of strange looking animals moving about in the room; in fact, he saw everything from little black bugs to "a couple of stately horsemen on beautiful white horses, dressed in the purest white and wearing crowns of gold which were all sparkling with jewels." He frequently found little adders in bed with him, but he was not afraid of them, and eyed them sternly, "well knowing to whom he was indebted for this agreeable and unceremonious bed fellow." On one occasion—

"The road appeared to be full of serpents, of all sorts and sizes; some of them were very large and appeared to be thirty feet or more in length. At first, they all seemed to be crawling slowly along, and the whole ground before me was covered with them so that it was impossible to step without treading on some of the monsters. . . . I took some pains to stamp on some of the largest, when I heard a multitude of voices saying, 'Damn the creature, see, he stamps on us, kill him, damn him, kill him,' and I soon found that they were not confined to a very slow motion for instead of crawling along the ground they were now all flying about in every direction."

And another time he found a company of little bears in front of the fireplace. . . .

3

Actually there was plenty to read in the Forties, bound in cloth blocked in blind or stamped in gold with a design of flowers, without going to the shelves which sheltered the works of Byron, and Moore, and Tennyson, Ainsworth and Bulwer, Dickens and Scott. Bryant, Whittier, Holmes and Lowell were contributing constantly to the periodicals; Longfellow was known, although perhaps not popularly, for *Evangeline.* Washington Irving was the bright ornament of American letters, with a transatlantic reputation which he shared with James Fenimore Cooper, who had already written *Red Rover, The Last of the Mohicans, Pathfinder* and *Deerslayer.* Herman Melville had produced his extraordinarily

popular South Sea books, *Typee* and *Omoo,* and had not yet scandalised his public with *Pierre.* Hawthorne had done some sketches and was writing *The Scarlet Letter.* A gentleman called Edgar Allan Poe was turning out queer, fascinating stories for the magazines.

Mr. Emerson, "that transcendentalist," was writing essays, and inspiring others from Amos B. Alcott, W. E. Channing and Margaret Fuller, although less philosophical readers perhaps preferred those by Noah and Paulding, Richard Henry Dana, Verplanck and N. P. Willis. There were treatises and sermons by Henry Ward Beecher and Horace Bushnell, and volumes of speeches and political writings by Calhoun, Webster and Clay, James Kent, Joseph Story and John Marshall. George Bancroft and Jared Sparks were producing histories; everyone was reading Prescott, and, in 1847, after *The Oregon Trail* had appeared in the *Knickerbocker Magazine,* hoping that Mr. Parkman would write some more; no one was reading poor Mr. Motley's novels, *Merton's Hope* and *Merry Mount,* which was a good thing as otherwise he might never have decided to write his *Dutch Republic.*

Among the humorists there were Cornelius Matthews, and Longstreet with his *Georgia Scenes,* and Hooper and his *Adventures of Captain Simon Suggs.* And for the children, Peter Parley's books and the *Rollo* series, those milestones of juvenile propriety, and stories by a certain Mr. Hans Andersen.

4

A great many persons were writing poetry. There was no law against it, and publishing costs were low. Somberly mellifluous, more or less metrically alliterative, sonorously vacuous poetry about nature, and about God, and about deceased children. "To my sister on giving birth to twins. . . ." They recorded everything in unreticent verse. The magazines, the newspapers and the wastebaskets of the reviewers were full of it. Some of it has found eternal rest in complaisant anthologies. Most of it has been forgiven and forgotten. Much of it would never have been written if Mr. Byron had not lived. A little of it still burns with a dimly persistent flame, beside the bright lamps kindled by Mr. Poe. Some stanzas, for instance, by Joseph Rodman Drake, and Fitz-Greene Halleck in his *Marco Bozzaris,* and Charles Fenno Hoffman with his ballads—

> "Our banners on those turrets wave,
> And there our evening bugles play;
> Where orange boughs above their grave
> Keep green the memory of the brave
> Who fought and fell at Monterey. . . ."

Perhaps the most popular poets of the period are the ones most completely forgotten today—Amelia Welby and N. P. Willis, Mrs. Frances S. Osgood, G. P. Morris, and James G. Percival who had them all sighing over his—

"Music and dances,
Smiles and bright glances,
Love's happy chances,
All are at play.
Youths with gay sashes,
Girls with calashes,
Quick as light flashes,
Foot it away."

And William Wetmore Story who, in that age guiltless of Bedouin chieftains, must have given all the young females a thrill with his *Cleopatra,* in which the Queen, while dreaming of the time when she was "a smooth and velvety tiger," recalls her mate, and—

"How powerful he was and grand!
His yellow eyes flashed fiercely
As he crouched and gazed at me,
And his quivering tail, like a serpent,
Twitched curving nervously.
Then like a storm he seized me,
With a wild, triumphant cry,
And we met, as two clouds in Heaven,
When the thunders before them fly.
We grappled and struggled together,
For his love like his rage was rude;
And his teeth in the swelling folds of my neck
At times, in our play, drew blood."

5

And then there was Mr. Poe, but before Mr. Poe there was Mr. Chivers who, perhaps to the former's subsequent embarrassment, antedated him in several

instances, at all events metrically. One or two of the earlier poet's passages are quite unique.

> "Many mellow, Cydonian suckets,
> Sweet apples, anthosmial, divine,
> From the ruby rimmed beryline buckets,
> Star gemmed, lily shaped, hyaline;
> Like the sweet, golden goblet found growing
> On the wild emerald cucumber tree,
> Rich, brilliant, like chrysoprase glowing,
> Was my beautiful Rosalie Lee."

Anthosmial apples, beryline buckets and wild cucumber trees are startling enough, but Mr. Chivers was never at a loss for he never hesitated, even when his muse moved him to write of "spooming oceans," and "As an egg when broken never can be mended, but must ever be the same crushed egg forever. . . ."

On the flyleaf of Mr. Evert Duyckinck's copy of *Memorabilia, or Phials of Amber full of the Tears of Love,* published by Mr. Chivers in 1853, is a pencil note, written anonymously at a later date, for a "Formula for Chivers—Shelley 30%, Poe 20%, Mild Idiocy 20%, Gibbering Idiocy 10%, Raving Mania 10%, Sweetness and Originality 10%=100%. It's a d—— sight better concoction than is served up by any contemporary poetaster except A. C. S., W. W., R. K." Which would seem to place Mr. Chivers, with all his varieties of idiocy and raving mania, on the same shelf with Algernon Charles Swinburne, William Watson and Rudyard Kipling—a select, if slightly incompatible, triumvirate. It is, however, a

fact that Mr. Swinburne welcomed Mr. Bayard Taylor with the words "Oh, Chivers, Chivers! If you know Chivers give me your hand," and regaled Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman with lengthy recitations from the works of the minor poet; while Mr. Kipling was paying his own compliment to Mr. Chivers when, in his poem *The Files,* he referred to the occasion "*when the Conchimarian horns of the reboantic Norns* usher gentlemen and ladies with new lights on Heaven and Hades."

Mr. Chivers himself, in the preface to his first published volume, *Nacoochee, or the Beautiful Star,* wrote that "Poetry is that crystal river of the soul which runs through all the avenues of life, and after purifying the affections of the heart, empties itself into the Sea of God." One can only remark that the river of his soul brought some strange flotsam to that sea on its erratic current, when it emptied into it such lines as "And Lena was divinely fair but he had swapped her for despair," and "He dug his heart a cruel ditch because his parents made him rich, and whensoe'er he plead his cause he quoted wealth in every clause," from *Malavolti, or the downfall of the Alamo.*

For pure futility, however, one is tempted to select the closing stanza of *The Dying Dove*—

"I saw her descend from the tall dewy limb—
The last tie was broken that bound her to him!
I lent down beside where she bade him adieu,
And gave her three lily-bells charged with the dew!

She drank like an infant three days after birth,
And turned o'er and died on the cold, clammy earth!
I mourned for my turtle—my poor dying dove!
No deep mellow wailings could woo back my love!"

although "And the wolf rings out with a glittering shout, to wit, to wit, to whoo," and the following lines from *The Orphan's Prayer,* are not far behind in mild idiocy—

"When they hand around the dishes,
Full of sweetmeats, all so free,
Then they smile to all good wishes
'Till they come around to me. . . ."

Perhaps the greatest compliment that can be paid to Mr. Chivers is the fact that Mr. Poe has been accused of borrowing the meter of *The Raven* from him. A much admired meter, apparently, when one remembers Mr. W. W. Lord's nearly contemporary lines in *The New Castalia*—

"And the stream flowed lapping, lapping,
And the leaves stirred tapping, tapping,
And the aged beldames napping,
Dreamed of gently rapping, rapping,
With a hammer gently tapping,
Tapping on an infant's skull—
And of white throats sweetly jagged,
With a ragged butch-knife dull,
And of night mares neighing, neighing,
On a sleeper's bosom squatting. . . ."

In his review of Mr. Lord's volume of poems, Mr. Poe observed that:

"the only remarkable things about Mr. Lord's compositions are their remarkable conceit, ignorance, impudence, platitude, stupidity, and bombast. . . . Whenever the reader meets anything not decidedly flat, he may take it for granted at once that it is stolen . . . as to any property of our own, Mr. Lord is very cordially welcome to whatever use he can make of it. . . . To the poet himself we have only to say, from any further specimens of your stupidity, good Lord deliver us!"

6

For fiction of a more permanent character than the "penny dreadfuls," although of a similar romantic and melodramatic nature, they were reading Mr. Bird's *The Hawks of Hawk Hollow* and *Nick of the Woods,* an extremely popular novel which ran to twenty-five editions, provided the plot for an excellent drama and was even translated into Polish; *Philothea,* a romance by Lydia M. Child; Mr. Hoffman's *Greyslayer;* J. P. Kennedy's *Swallow Barn* and *Horse Shoe Robinson;* Mr. Paulding's *Koningsmarke the long Finne* and *Westward Ho;* William Ware's *Zenobia, Queen of the East;* Catherine Sedgwick's *The Linnwoods;* N. B. Tucker's *George Balcombe* which Mr. Poe considered the best American novel ever written; and Charles Brockden Brown's *Ormond, Edgar Huntly, or the memoirs of a Sleep Walker* and *Wieland, or the Transformation.*

Mr. Brown was an extraordinary man who wrote five astonishing novels before he was thirty. He

"NICK OF THE WOODS"

A very popular novel and melodrama of the period

was twenty-seven when he finished *Wieland* in 1798, but nearly one hundred years later editions of the book were still being published, and in the preface of one of these the editor says that Mr. Brown wrote "a series of the most original, powerful and masterly, though faulty and in some respects imperfect and objectionable works of fiction of which American literature could then, or perhaps can now, boast. . . . They are indeed remarkable productions. . . . They are original in every sense . . . full of energy and pathos, they abound with passages of genuine eloquence and irresistible force. Few works excite such breathless anxiety and awful apprehension." Mr. Brown was in many ways, perhaps, the Wilkie Collins of his day.

Wieland is written in the form of a personal narrative by Wieland's sister, Clara, and opens with an account of the death of their father in a small shrine, or "temple," on a hillside, from the effects of a mysterious, supernatural light. Subsequently, "one afternoon in May, the blandness of the air and brightness of the verdure induced us to assemble earlier than usual in the temple. We females were busy at the needle, while my brother and Pleyel"—her brother-in-law—"were bandying quotations and syllogisms." A rain storm drove them to the house where they remained "engaged in sprightly conversation," until Wieland returned to the temple for a letter which had been mislaid. On his way up the hill his wife, Catherine, who was actually "seated in a careless attitude on the sofa" in the house at the time,

seemed to call to him and warn him of danger. "Stop, go no farther—there is danger in your path."

On another occasion Wieland and Pleyel had gone for a walk, while Clara and Catherine remained at home. "They promised to return shortly, but hour after hour passed and they made not their appearance. Engaged in sprightly conversation, it was not until the clock struck twelve that we were reminded of the lapse of time." They came home, finally, in great agitation and Pleyel asked Clara—

"How were you employed during our absence?"

"In turning over the Della Crusca dictionary and talking on different subjects."

"Catherine was with you the whole time?"

"Yes."

"Lo! I have news to tell you. The Baroness Stolberg is dead!"

The Baroness was "her whom he loved." It appears they had gone to the temple and were talking of the Baroness when they seemed to hear Catherine's voice. "The seal of death is on her lips; her silence is the silence of the tomb!"—"Who is it that speaks?" Pleyel cried. "Whence did you procure these dismal tidings?"—"From a source that cannot fail. She is dead." And she was.

So matters go, most mysteriously, and, it must be said, quite thrillingly, until one day a stranger, Carwin, comes to the door and says to the maid: "Prythee, good girl, canst thou supply a thirsty man with a glass of buttermilk?"—and from then on the

most remarkable, and in many instances scandalous, events take place. They are always hearing voices, people are all the time whispering in closets or screaming in empty rooms; and Carwin frequently behaves in a most reprehensible manner, especially towards Clara whose bed chamber he seems to use as a public thoroughfare. When the situation has become unspeakably confused and hair raising, Pleyel charges Clara with conduct unbecoming a lady of her customary virtue.

"Pleyel loaded me with indecent and virulent invectives," she complains to her brother, "but he withheld from me the facts that generated his suspicions. Events took place last night of which some of the circumstances were of an ambiguous nature. . . ."

One must have read the accumulated paragraphs which describe them to appreciate the truth of her observation! Wieland tells her that:

"Pleyel was attracted by two voices. These persons were Carwin and you. I will not repeat the dialogue. If my sister was the female, Pleyel was justified in concluding you to be indeed one of the most profligate of women. . . ."

Always those mysterious, misleading voices. They finally drive Wieland into a fit of religious mania during which, in the belief that he is interpreting the spoken commands of the Almighty, he strangles his wife and slaughters his four children.

It was not for nothing that the author, in his "advertisement," stated that the incidents related in his book were "extraordinary and rare." But Clara has discovered something.

"Begone, thou man of mischief!" she says to Carwin. "Remorseless and implacable miscreant, begone! Was not thine the voice that commanded my brother to imbrue his hands in the blood of his children—to strangle that angel of sweetness, his wife? Hast thou not made him the butcher of his family—changed him who was the glory of his species into worse than brute—robbed him of reason and consigned the rest of his days to fetters and stripes?"

Carwin's eyes, Clara reports, glared and his limbs were petrified at this intelligence. "No words were requisite to prove him guiltless of these enormities; at the time, however, I was nearly insensible to these exculpatory tokens." Finally Carwin explained everything.

"You are not apprised," he informed Clara, "of the existence of a power which I possess. I have handled a tool of wonderful efficacy without malignant intentions, but without caution. Would to God I had died unknowing of the secret!"

In other words, Carwin was a *ventriloquist*. . . .

And in addition to such lugubrious works, composed with a freedom of vocabulary and situation which one would scarcely have believed popular in the supposedly straight-laced Forties, everyone was reading Sylvester Judd's *Margaret, a tale of the Real*

and Ideal, Blight and Bloom, and waiting for him to finish *Richard Edney, or the governor's Family,* "a rus-urban tale, simple and popular yet cultured and noble, of morals, sentiment and life, practically treated and pleasantly illustrated"; D. P. Thompson's *Mary Martin, or the Money Diggers* and *The Green Mountain Boys,* each of which went through some fifty editions; Hannah Foster's *The Coquette, or the history of Eliza Wharton,* which still held its public in 1870; and the greatest "best seller" of them all, written in 1794 and in print more than a hundred years later, Susanna H. Rowson's *Charlotte Temple, a Tale of Truth.* A simple little tale of seduction in military circles based on the actual facts of the life of the real Charlotte whose grave stone, at least, is in Trinity Churchyard, Broadway—from which Mrs. Rowson produced a book which, for three generations certainly, was the most popular and the most widely sold novel in America, perhaps not excepting *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* and furnished the material for a play which remained on the boards for decades on both sides of the Atlantic. The purpose of the book is set forth in the preface, in which the author says—

"For the perusal of the young and thoughtless of the fair sex this Tale of Truth is designed; and I could wish my fair readers to consider it as not merely the effusion of fancy, but as a reality. . . . If the following tale should save one hapless fair one from the errors which ruined poor Charlotte, or rescue from impending misery the heart of one anxious parent, I shall feel a much higher gratifica-

tion in reflecting on this trifling performance than could possibly result from the applause which might attend the most elegant, finished piece of literature whose tendency might deprave the heart or mislead the understanding."

And the tone of the narrative is evident in certain digressions which occur constantly, in which, for instance, the author remarks—

"In affairs of love, a young heart is never in more danger than when attempted by a handsome young soldier. . . . Ah well-a-day for the poor girl who gazes on him, she is in imminent danger. . . .

"Gracious Heaven! When I think on the miseries that must rend the heart of a doting parent when he sees the darling of his age at first seduced from his protection, and afterwards abandoned by the very wretch whose promises of love decoyed her from the paternal roof . . . my bosom glows with honest indignation and I wish for power to extirpate those monsters of seduction from the earth. Oh, my dear girls—for to such only I am writing—listen not to the voice of love unless sanctioned by paternal approbation. Be assured it is now past the days of romance—no woman can be run away with contrary to her own inclination."

In writing which Mrs. Rowson was voicing a great, though frequently neglected, truth. . . .

And then there was Mr. Simms, the G. A. Henty of his time, the foremost, and the most prolific, writer of historical romances of the period, to say nothing of countless histories, biographies, poems, and ora-

tions. His complete bibliography contains over eighty items; during the decade of the Forties alone he published ten romantic tales and four biographies. *Guy Rivers, The Yemassee, Mellichampe,* everyone was reading them, and *Richard Hurdis, or the Avenger of Blood, Beauchampe* and *The Scout, or the Black Riders of the Congaree.*

"I have no share in the base puddle that fills your veins. I glory in the name that scares your puny squadrons. I am the chief of the Black Riders of the Congaree—that fell banditti which makes your women shiver and your warriors fly . . . I loathe you from my soul, Clarence Conway—do you hear me?"

"I hear you. Your violence does not alarm me, Edward Conway. I look upon you as a madman. As for your threats, pshaw!"

Pshaw indeed. . . .

7

Once every twelve months, at the turn of the year, the book stalls were filled with samples of a type of publication which endured in America for some thirty-five years, and enjoyed its greatest popularity in the late Forties—the Literary Annual and the Gift Book.

From Mr. Faxon's volume on these literary curiosities one learns that the fashion for them was set, in 1823, in England where, by 1832, as many as sixty were being issued annually. In America, the pioneer

annual, *The Atlantic Souvenir,* was published in Philadelphia, in 1826. The fad did not become popularized so rapidly in this country, but in the late Forties America, also, was producing some fifty or sixty annuals a year. Many of them only appeared once; some assumed the names of earlier discontinued issues; others actually contained the subject matter of old annuals under a different title and with new illustrations. Mr. Faxon lists six annuals, issued in separate years from 1849 to 1855, all of which were identical in contents. A few titles were offered year after year, such as *The Token* which ran to fifteen volumes, and *The Rose of Sharon* which remained on the stalls for eighteen consecutive seasons.

The American Literary Annuals were at first duodecimos, then octavos, and finally, in some cases, quartos. They appeared in most elaborate bindings of embossed leather or watered silk, ornately gilded, and contained as many as twelve engraved or colored plates, known as "embellishments," besides a vignette on the title page and, frequently, a colored "inscription plate" on which the name of the recipient was written with suitable sentiments by the donor. These plates were at first obtained in England, but after a time their preparation was entrusted to some of the foremost American engravers of the period, and it is the presence within their covers of engravings by Durand, Smillie, Sartain and John Cheney which give these books their present day collector's value —together with the fact that in them are to be found many "first edition" stories and poems by most of

the writers of the age, for even the most successful authors were accustomed to publish their work in these presentation volumes. *The Gift* for 1845, for instance, contains contributions by Longfellow, N. P. Willis, C. F. Hoffman, Simms, Emerson and Poe, and four engravings by Cheney. *The Fountain* for 1847, "a gift to stir up the pure mind by remembrance," presents eight embellishments by Sartain and items by Horace Greeley, Bayard Taylor and Whittier.

The Gift Books which came into vogue in the middle Forties, such as *The Casket of Love, The Flower Vase* and *The Hare-Bell*—all of them "a Christmas, New Year and Birthday present"—were small volumes, usually bound in dark cloth, and embellished only by a frontispiece. As in the case of the annuals, they contained poems, essays and short stories which, Mr. Faxon reports, were remarkable for their "freedom from the slightest taint of impropriety. There was never a contribution that savored of the lack of refinement."

In many cases the titles are sufficient to appraise one of the nature of the text—"Dew drops of the nineteenth century gathered and presented in their brightness and purity"—"Gems from the sacred mine, or holy thoughts upon sacred subjects"—"The Golden Chalice, or mental draughts from many fountains"—"The Wedding Guest, a friend of the bride and bridegroom"—"My Teacher's New Year's present"—"The Opal, a pure gift for the holy days"—"Apples of gold in pictures of silver"—"The beauties

of sacred literature"—"The lady's vase of wild flowers"—"The temperance token"—"Flora's fortune teller"—"The gift of friendship"—"The forget me not"—"The poetry of love"—"The young lady's book, a manual of elegant recreations, exercises and pursuits"—and "The cypress wreath, a book of consolation for those who mourn."

How they must have simplified Christmas and anniversary shopping.

8

It was an era of innumerable quarterlies and monthly magazines. Aside from the countless religious and professional publications, and the juveniles such as *The Youth's Companion, The Child's Friend,* and *Merry's Museum,* and the abundant output of cheap periodicals intended principally for women, everyone, according to his taste, was reading *The Literary Gazette,* and *The Literary World,* and *The Knickerbocker Magazine; Littell's Living Age* and *The Dial;* the Boston *North American Review,* and the Charleston *Southern Quarterly Review,* and the Richmond *Southern Literary Messenger; The Dollar Magazine, Peterson's National Magazine* and *The Saturday Evening Post,* all published in Philadelphia; and, of course, *Graham's Magazine,* "embracing every department of literature, embellished with engravings, fashions and music arranged for the piano forte, harp and guitar," also published in Philadelphia; and the most popular one of them all,

another product of scholarly Philadelphia, *Godey's Lady's Book.*

A magazine of the most chaste refinement, in which were to be found the habitually unremunerated prose and verse of T. S. Arthur, Miss Sedgwick, Miss Leslie, and Mrs. Sigourney; Mrs. Osgood, Amelia Welby, Epes Sargent and N. P. Willis; Mrs. Ellet, Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Farley; G. P. Morris and W. G. Simms; together with fashion plates, hints on needlework, illustrated guides to physical culture, embellishments, and music—

"She has departed,
The gentle hearted,
Her soul no longer by grief invaded;
And music lingers,
From angel fingers,
Around the death bed of Little Nell. . . ."

And, occasionally, an article such as Mrs. Hale's "Cause and Cure," from which one may learn what they thought of themselves—

"In this country, there being no established rank and privileged class, wealth has been found to be the surest letter of introduction into the highest and most polished circles, and the representative of power and consequence. . . . And this haste to be rich is the evil of our times; the Upas tree whose poison is paralyzing and destroying the life of the soul, and withering every green hope for the future. There is a cramping and debasing influence exerted by this systematic, absorbing pursuit after wealth. Let

money be made the one thing needful . . . and the history of our Republic will, ere long, have been written. On its crumbling ruins . . . this memento as a warning to other nations will be inscribed—'This people fell through a passionate and slavish devotion to wealth.'

"And here it is that our country needs the power of female talent to be exerted, the efficiency of moral training to be tested. Let this besetting sin of our times be studiously watched by the Christian mother. Let us guard against this insidious influence of Mammon. Let not gold be the standard value of everything. . . . If every woman in our country who now fills the awfully responsible office of mother . . . were qualified for her station and faithful to perform its duties what a revolution would be wrought in the social and moral world! What an improvement in the character of man!"

But Mrs. Hale was talking against the winds of destiny. . . .

In another article, written by William Kirkland in 1845, the whole subject of magazines is discussed in an illuminating manner. The amount of reading furnished by the English and American periodicals formed, it seems, a large part of the reading of the literary world in America. Most books scarcely found a purchaser, but all the magazines were read assiduously.

"Lack of patience for investigation and a longing after variety seem to be the characteristics of the reading public of our times, and this may in some measure account for books being less in favor and periodicals more."

The British periodicals enlisted the warmest political and religious feeling, "we, on the other hand, have no national questions similar in intensity and universality of interest." A most extensive department of the foreign monthlies, that of criticism, was practically neglected in the American magazines; in the geographical department, also, the British journals greatly excelled the American. The prevailing aim of the English publications was to instruct and convince, that of the American to please. The English were more masculine in character, the American more completely devoted to women. But,

"while our magazines lack the strength and variety of their transatlantic compeers, they breathe a more amiable spirit and are entirely free from that coarseness which is so often observable in the English contributions of the Trollope school."

Mr. Kirkland was not in favor of the continued story.

"Editors abroad," he says, "have found one mode of filling their pages which it is to be hoped will never become fashionable here. This is the 'sea serpent' romances of such writers as Ainsworth and James. They are bad enough . . . whole and undisguised, but to spread such ineffable insipidity through a dozen numbers at the rate of thirty pages per month is to subject a large class of readers to periodical nausea. Dickens in his best days and Lever in his newest could bear this diffusion but . . . we abominate the whole series of serials."

He did not approve of the embellishments, either. It was a question whether such ornaments without special meaning or applicability were desirable accompaniments to a magazine, and abroad they were almost entirely unknown, or confined to periodicals "of the lowest literary pretension."

As for the love tales "which our magazines inflict upon us in such overpowering quantity," they were less of an evil than the serials, but still they were an evil.

"Love is much less the staple of the British magazines than our own. Whether the cause be that love is more an element of American life, or that our editors, cutting off politics, religion and indeed everything of a controversial character, have left a narrower field for their contributors, the fact is certain that the amount of love that floats an American magazine would speedily sink a British one. . . . . Some authors can write of nothing else but love, while constant readers naturally sink into a sympathetic sentimentalism, and find every day duties, events and characters wearisome, perhaps disgusting. . . ."

And, finally, the public taste in America was so fickle, so morbidly desirous of novelty, so "ready to give up the best for the newest," that an editor must always:

"be taking care that no new star appear whose rays do not illuminate his pages. Really good and varied writing is not enough for his readers; he must startle or amuse by something approaching the nature of stage trick or clap-trap. . . ."

Which is perhaps one reason why one comes—with delighted surprise and frank curiosity—upon the following advertisement in the New York *Herald,* in December, 1848—

"The beautiful adulteress—the libertine statesman—the Black Prince and his harem—the lustful widow and her daughters—the amorous doctor—the naughty woman—the husband poisoner—seduction and murder—with a hundred other articles on crime, prostitution and mystery, of most startling interest, in *The Scorpion,* for sale everywhere."

The fabulous Forties. . . .

9

One may not close an account of the literary activities of the Forties without a reference to two novels which, while they were not published until the early Fifties, are an expression of the point of view of the period and represent a summing up of its influence on a writer who had reached her thirtieth year, only, at the close of the decade and was, consequently, an immediate and freshly blossomed product of its environment, training and mental attitude.

When, under the pen name of Elizabeth Wetherell, Susan Warner wrote *The Wide Wide World* and *Queechy* she was drawing on her own girlhood and not far distant childhood impressions, voicing the habits of thought and conduct of her generation, and expressing the accumulated effect of contemporary upbringing and moral education. In her heroines, Ellen and Fleda, one sees almost all the little

girls of the Thirties and Forties, and in her Hugh at least one of that concourse of little boys who were nurtured on the *Rollo* books and *Swiss Family Robinson,* and, later, on *Ministering Children,* and whose authorized Sunday reading consisted of *The Bible in Spain,* on account of its title, and *Pilgrim's Progress.* And while there can be no question of being critical at the expense of Miss Warner's novels —their prolonged popularity and their place in the affections of countless readers would render any such attempt futile and ungracious—one may, however, claim the privilege of remarking on certain features which characterize them, and through them the age which they represent.

And nothing in them stands out more clearly, perhaps, than the intense religious fervor which animated individuals of all ages during those decades, to an extent which becomes almost incredible in this present day of somewhat perfunctory, hebdomadal devotion. In *The Wide Wide World* there are five hundred pages of almost constant religious discussions, hymns and prayers. When Ellen writes to her mother she says:

"My dearest Mamma. . . . I can't be happy as long as you are away, but I will try. Oh, I will try, Mamma. . . . You will want to know about my journey. I was sitting up on the upper deck when a gentleman came up and spoke to me. . . . Oh, Mamma, how he talked to me. He read in the Bible to me, and explained it, and he tried to make me a

Christian. And, oh, Mamma, when he was talking to me, how I wanted to do as he said, and I resolved I would." In *Queechy* Fleda, aged eleven, soliloquises "And if God takes care of them all, will he not take care of poor little me? Oh, how glad I am I know there is a God! How glad I am I know He is such a God, and that I can trust in Him. . . . How I forget this sometimes! But Jesus does not forget His children. Oh, I am a happy little girl." When Fleda is taking leave of her Aunt Miriam the latter asks her—

"Elfleda, do you know what was your mother's prayer for you?"

"Yes. . . . that I might be kept—"

"Unspotted from the world! My sweet blossom, how wilt thou keep so? Will you always remember your mother's prayer?"

"I will try."

"How will you try, Fleda?"

"I will pray."

When Fleda meets her little cousin Hugh, the two children, referring to the death of their grandfather, converse as follows—

"Was he a good man?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then," said Hugh, "you know he is happy now, Fleda. If he loved Jesus Christ he is gone to be with Him."

One cannot, in all reverence, avoid the suspicion that the children of that day were insufferable little prigs. . . .

Aside from that both novels are limp with un-

necessary tears. When Mr. Van Brunt, the hired man, offered to make a swing for Ellen if she would give him a kiss—

"Poor Ellen was struck dumb. . . . She stood motionless, utterly astounded at his unheard of proposal. . . . She rushed to the house, and bursting open the door, stood with flushed face and sparkling eyes in the presence of her aunt." And when her aunt was merely amused—"the laugh, the look, the tone stung Ellen to the very quick. In a fury of passion she dashed up to her own room. And there, for a while, the storm of anger drove over her with such violence that conscience had hardly time to whisper. Sorrow came in again as passion faded, and gentler but very bitter weeping took the place of convulsive sobs of rage and mortification. . . . Then came thoughts of her Bible and hymn book . . . and she prayed earnestly to be made a good child. . . . It was long after mid-day when Ellen rose from her knees."

In *Queechy* again, the story proceeds through more than six hundred tear drenched pages, until the love scene at the end, when—

"In the midst of silks, muslins and jewels Mr. Carleton found Fleda still on his return. . . . Then gently and gravely, as if she had been a child, putting his arm around her shoulders and drawing her to him, he whispered—

" 'My dear Elfie—you need not fear being misunderstood—'

"Fleda started and looked up to see what he meant. But his face said it so plainly . . . that her

barrier of self-command and reserve was all broken down; and hiding her head in her hands upon his breast she let the pent-up burden upon her heart come forth in a flood of unrestrained tears. . . . Mr. Carleton did not move, nor speak, till she did.

" 'I never knew before how good you were, Mr. Carleton. . . .'

" 'You shall give me a reward then, Effie.'

" 'What reward?'

" 'Promise me that you will shed tears nowhere else.'

" 'Nowhere else?'

" 'But here, in my arms.'

" 'I don't feel like crying any more now,' said Fleda evasively"—but only for a moment—" 'at least not sorrowfully. . . .'

"Fleda looked up . . . the full, clear, steadfast eye into which she looked for two seconds authorized as well as required the promise; and hiding her face again on his breast Fleda gave it, amid a gush of tears every one of which was illumined with heart sunshine."

A perfect screen drama ending. . . .

CHAPTER VI

TONIGHT AT SEVEN

1

New Chatham Theatre
The Grand Eastern Dramatic Spectacle
of Cherry and Fair Star, or
THE CHILDREN OF CYPRUS

To be performed at this theatre which has been for months in preparation. The scenery is of the most gorgeous description, the machinery very expensive and peculiar, the dresses costly in the extreme. The whole forming a combination which renders it the most imposing and splendid spectacle ever presented in this city, with the following beautiful and picturesque scenery.

Act I

The Avis grove or Fairy Abode consisting of forests and waterfalls. The Fairy Car formed of feathers of the most radiant kind. View of the Sea and

wrecked vessel. The Aloe Tree which blooms, from which the fairy Papilla appears. The Fairy Vision. Dispersion of the mist through which the city is seen. The port and city of Cyprus, which is one of the most beautiful scenes ever beheld, the stage being entirely covered with water. A large Grecian galley arrives with Prince Cherry, Fair Star, etc., who are cheered by the assembled citizens while sailing around the stage producing one grand and beautiful effect and the most imposing tableau that can be witnessed. Huzza, huzza, welcome to our land!

Act II

Ramparts and perfect view of the city of Cyprus. Valley of Cyprus by moonlight. The rock splits and discovers Cherry's gorgeous armor. The burning forest and enchanted waters. Terrific appearance of the Fire King! Combat. He is defeated by Prince Cherry. His sudden disappearance through the earth. The Magic Shield! The Frozen Mountain. The Charmed Snowball. The Palace of Cyprus. The Fairy Galleys. Denouement.

Performance begins at 7. Boxes, 50c.

Second and third tiers, 25c.

Pit and gallery, 12½c.

2

That was in 1841. The spectacle provided by the Model Artists of 1847, on the other hand, was of a quite different character.

It all began innocently enough as a result of the artistic sensation created by Mr. Powers's statue of the Greek Slave. Since the entire town was paying its money to view this piece of inanimate sculpture, it occurred to a certain Dr. Collyer that the same result might be achieved, with considerable profit to himself, by bringing the statue to life at Palmo's Opera House. He accordingly introduced "this new movement in the fine arts" in New York by exhibiting, "living men and women in almost the same state in which Gabriel saw them in the Garden of Eden on the first morning of creation." Dr. Collyer had not misinterpreted the public taste, even in that era which occasionally thought nothing of dressing the "limbs" of pianofortes in frilled pantalettes. The exhibition—conceptions vary as to the quantity of clothing worn in the Garden of Eden—was crowded by all classes of society, and the ingenuity of Dr. Collyer was not without immediate imitators, until there were probably a dozen different places in town, "taverns, hotels, saloons, and other drinking houses, where young men and women were exhibited as *tableaux vivants,* in every form and shape, and for every price from sixpence up to fifty cents."

Of these resorts there was none more popular and refined than the Broadway Odeon, entrance to which was gained through Pinteaux's Saloon, in other words the old Café des Mille Colonnes, in its day one of the most brilliant and fashionable gathering places in the city. Here, every evening, before large audiences, were given *"tableaux vivants,* or living

male and female figures by the Model Artists," including such "groupings" as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Hagar and Ishmael, and Neptune rising from the Sea. Not Venus, Neptune. Everything was going very nicely when the management suddenly made an unfortunate blunder. It decided, "contrary to law and order," to give a performance of sacred tableaux on the evening of *Sunday,* December 26. Whereupon the Chief of Police, abetted by the Aldermen, presented himself at the Odeon with a large force of constabulary for the purpose of putting an end to "this curious idea" by the simple process of arresting, on a charge of infringement upon the Sabbath, all concerned and in particular "several beautiful women who call themselves models of art and have been personating all the tableaux of Holy Scripture from Eve in the Garden of Eden down to Esther in the Persian hot bath."

Hagar and Ishmael passed off without interruption, but just as the pedestal in Jacob in the House of Laban was revolving "with three well formed females *attired in short skirts"* there was a sudden descent of the representatives of the law upon the stage, causing uproarious excitement in the audience and consternation upon the pedestal. The curtain came down rather hastily on a "scene of stirring interest," especially in the dressing rooms—

"where some five or six well formed females were in the act of preparing for the next tableau. In one corner was seen a very fleshy lady dressed as Bacchus,

studying her position on a barrel. Another beautifully formed creature, just drawing on her tights for the Greek Slave, and some of the others, were so dreadfully alarmed at the sight of the police with their clubs in hand that they seized up a portion of their garments in order to hide their faces, forgetting their lower extremities, thus making a scene mixed up with the sublime and the ridiculous."

At all events, the whole troupe of seven girls and three men were escorted, accompanied by a tremendous crowd, at nine o'clock of a December evening, in the costumes in which the police had found them, to the station house where they were "provided with accommodations for the night," and where the manager caused a supper of roast turkey and wine to be served them in order to "cheer their souls."

The immediate, and inevitable, result of this "singular *émeute*" was to throw "the whole world of the under crust of fashion" into a state of great excitement, and to bring out a perfect rash of similar entertainments in every part of the city, which were all crowded to suffocation. As for the Odeon, the Sunday fines were paid, and the establishment remained the most popular and profitable one of its kind in town; but while at Pinteaux's the exhibitions were admitted to be extremely classic and beautiful, some of those on the side streets were "an outrage to human nature," in which, under the unvarying designation of Model Artists, "living men and women appeared in a semi-transparent drapery looking like nudity." In fact, the Odeon itself found it advis-

able to assure the public that morals were respected in its performances and that no tableaux were produced which the most fastidious might not gaze upon.

But the public clamor was increasing, for all that the audiences showed no signs of diminishing. The exhibitions were growing worse and worse, "more nakedness and less drapery" all the time. In one place "naked ladies" were being exhibited through a doorway across which "a large gauze" had been stretched. The admission was one dollar, and the girls received three dollars a night and a good supper. The "auditorium" was packed to the ceiling and they were just getting ready to do Venus—not Neptune this time—Venus rising from the Sea, when the rooms were most unfortunately raided by the police. Aside from the countless side street shows, there were in March, 1848, six establishments open every night, "one of them for the exhibition of naked negroes." In some of these the artists actually danced the polka and the minuet. "Only think of the indecency now indulged in!" the New York *Herald* exclaimed, and called upon the Common Council to suppress these degrading spectacles.

A terrific riot occurred finally in Canal Street, in which a crowd of rowdies from the Bowery invaded the theatre, smashed all the furniture, climbed up on the stage, and chased the female performers in tights out into the streets. Shamed by this vigorous, though ill advised, expression of virtuous indignation on the part of the Bowery boys, the Common Council took belated action. The Odeon, Palmo's,

Thiers's Concert Room, the Temple of the Muses, Novelty Hall, and the Anatomical Museum were all indicted by the Grand Jury on March 22. . . .

And in May of that year someone in the *Sunday Mercury* was asking "Where are the Model Artists gone—

> "Those nice *tableaux vivants*
> Of beautiful young ladies, *sans*
> Both petticoats and pants,
> Who scorning fashion's shifts and whims
> Did nightly crowds delight,
> By showing up their handsome limbs
> At fifty cents a sight. . . ."

Well—the Odeon was advertising "Pygmalion Statuary"; Palmo's was announcing "Grace in every step, Heaven in her eye—such language in poetry is developed in every attitude of the living, life-like, symmetrical, chaste, and bewitching models at the Opera House where virtue triumphs over vice—where the three graces impart ease and delicacy to the popular taste—where" and this is without question one of the most spectacular sentences ever composed—

"where the perfection of art and science takes the place of crude abortions and mechanical structures that the intelligence of our free and discriminating people rejects as unworthy of a nation possessing every element and every facility for the highest attainment in every organization of society that contributes to improve the social condition."

3

It is difficult to appreciate today, but the fact remains that, in spite of three plays a night at most of the houses in New York, a constant change of program, and the presence on the boards of such stages as the Park of artists whose names have passed into the annals of American drama, the theatre of the Forties was in a very bad way.

On the evening of December 30, 1840, for instance, the Bowery was given over to the horses; there were not twenty persons in the boxes at the Park, and not many more in the pit; while the attendance at the National was equally discouraging. The excellent Mr. Simpson who had been a manager for nearly twenty years, who had always "kept things straight and moral," who was a good actor, and who never quarrelled with the press, was finding it impossible to pay his rent and his salaries. Mr. Wilson who was "a very indifferent manager and actor," and who was always quarrelling with the press, was having no better luck. Both ways were tried, and both failed. "To bed, to sleep!" the New York *Herald* advised them. "Take a benefit and shut up, and sleep through the winter like dormice." In its opinion the competition of managers was to blame for this collapse of the legitimate drama, as well as the want of novelty in the pieces produced, the decay of talent, the change in the public taste, and "a growing belief that the management of the theatres had leaned too much to aid licentiousness and immorality instead of good taste and refined manners."

Again on the same evening in December, 1847, at the other end of the decade, the Bowery cleared $450, and the Chatham and the Olympic about $100 apiece, while the Park, the Broadway and the Astor only took in some $50 each. The attendance at the three last named theatres, striving to present legitimate drama and opera to fashionable audiences, was insignificant, but the cheap theatres, "even the dirty Olympic," were doing a quite reasonable business in burlesque and acrobatic entertainments. "The Broadway hardly paid expenses," the *Herald* remarks, "but the Bowery was overwhelmingly and suffocatingly full. Levi North, the famous equestrian, created a greater sensation and collected a greater audience than all the prima donnas from Italy ever did at the Broadway or the Astor." The Broadway was evidently struggling to establish a character without resorting to the circus, and the Park must shortly close or else bring out "some large horses as stars, or some fat children." But they were both doomed, and "destined to the horses."

And when a theatre went to the horses in the Forties, this is the sort of thing that happened.

BOWERY THEATRE

TONIGHT

The entertainment will commence with a splendid classification of scenes in the Circle by an entirely new Grand Pageant Equestrian Entree of Men and Horses entitled the

SONS OF FREEDOM

In which twelve new performers, mounted on their high trained Chargers, will perform a variety of magnificent evolutions and equestrian movements, allegorically attired as the Guardian Genii of America, holding the cap of Liberty, and unfurling the Triumphant Stripes and Stars.

THE VAULTING TROUPE!

will then appear and mutually challenge each other to a veritable Great Arena Contest. The interesting and highly gifted MASTER GLENROY will then make his first appearance here, on his rapid steed, and execute all his courageous and original feats with a daring and decision that elicit nightly pæans of applause. . . .

To conclude with the Grand Military Melodramatic Spectacle in 3 Acts of the BATTLE OF WATERLOO!

Boxes 75c. Pit, 37½c. Gallery, 25c.

4

The truth of the matter was that the fashionable American public of the Forties was not a theatre going public. It worked hard all day at its business, or at its household duties, and in the evening it preferred to read its newspapers, converse with its friends, or write in its diaries. It went willingly enough to lectures on mesmerism, and phrenology, and animal magnetism, and the electric telegraph, to

religious revivals of all kinds, to pantomimes and circuses, to the fireworks and to the museum of natural wonders, but when it came to the theatre it was more likely to turn to such "Moral, Instructive, Recreative, and Temperate Amusements" as—

SIGNOR HERVIO NANO

the justly celebrated and naturally endowed metempsychosian, whose extraordinary personification of the Gnome, the Baboon, the Fly, etc., has been the delight of the world, who announces his intention of visiting the city with his Colliseum. A facsimile of the Rotunda Olympica at Paris and a splendid brass band of music will make the entertainment superior to anything yet offered. To consist of a Metempsychosian Bazaar flight of fancy, called the Gnome Fly, in which Signor Nano will embody the Gnome! the Baboon! ! the Fly! ! ! a Man! ! ! !
To be followed by a Musical Olio consisting of pianoforte recitations by Madame H. Nano.

Ladies in general seldom attended the theatre, except to see a Fanny Elssler, or an occasional opera, or some visiting dramatic star, and even in gentlemen the habit of theatre going was considered indiscreet and an evidence of wildness. It was left to the lower classes to storm the doors of the Bowery and of the Olympic every Saturday night and get their fifty cents' worth of melodrama and burlesque. In other words the dramatic muse was not a lady in the Forties, but a painted hussy, and her votaries shared the

social ostracism imposed upon her by a public nourished on the puritan tradition of theatrical depravity. The origin of this tradition, or rather its perpetuation, was not to be found in any single outburst of clumsy immorality such as the self-conscious, and somewhat tepid, impudicities of the Model Artists. One has seen enough already of the mentality of the period, surely, to appreciate its thinly coated prudery. The people of the Forties were no better, and no worse, than those of any other era in their response to fundamental frivolities. There was another, and more domestic, cause, a circumstance of the prevalent social structure, which inevitably closed the theatre, at least to feminine patronage.

It all came out very bluntly in the columns of the New York *Herald* on the occasion of the presentation at the Park Theatre, in October, 1842, of *The Israelites in Egypt, or the Passage of the Red Sea,* an entertainment consisting of a rehash of Handel's and Rossini's music, scenery and "personation," and of no importance whatsoever except that it was the first "sacred drama" ever produced in America. As an added attraction the spectacle was known to have been suppressed in England by the Bishop of London. In its sacred capacity, however, it created a considerable contemporary sensation. The *Herald* called it "a new and curious movement in theatricals," reprinted the entire text of the work on its front page, and observed that "the celebrated prophet, Miller, who predicts the end of the world, sets up his great tent at Newark—prophet Miller at Newark

and a Sacred Drama at the Park Theatre are great events and certainly indicate some awful catastrophe." The only catastrophe which occurred was the performance itself of the drama in question, but the event produced an ironic editorial which one is bound to quote at some length for the sake of the unexpected light which it throws, not only on the theatre, but also on the religious state of the country.

"Important religious intelligence. One of the most important features of the progress of civilisation and light in this happy and wonderful country is the daily and weekly intellectual movement, composed of a thousand different hues all radiant as the rainbow that embraces the Park fountain on a sunshiny day—a movement of the religious opinions, notions, creeds, and doctrines throughout the breadth and width of this effervescent and sparkling land. Like a country blessed with a thousand springs of clear water, all bubbling up today, so is this republican Union covered from one end to the other with the refreshing springs of religion—the gushing fountains of piety—the clear rills of creeds, of all shapes, colors and conditions. Among the master spirits in this great and original movement of the human mind, under the influence of a light from Heaven, we may enumerate Bishop Hughes, Prophet Joe Smith, Parson Miller . . . besides many lesser stars in both the moral as well as in the religious world, all of whom are more or less efficient for good, and in the aggregate give a peculiarly high, holy, and elevated and intellectual character to the age. . . .

"But, what is still more wonderful, we may now add to this list of moral and religious reformers a name that will surprise many and make saints and

Valentine's Manual, 1855

PARK THEATRE AND PART OF PARK ROW, 1831

sinners gape—we mean the respectable name of Edmund Simpson of the Park Theatre, who has taken a step in the moral and religious tendencies of the age that is as bold, as daring, as fearless as that which marked the movements of Luther and Calvin. . . . It will be found that in piety, in devotion, and in pure religious feeling of the highest kind, the principal songs or concerted pieces of this curious drama, *The Israelites in Egypt,* are equal to the liturgies of the Episcopal and Catholic churches—and surpass even many of the prayers of the Baptists, the Presbyterians, and other respectable sects of Christians in all that constitutes devotional poetry and pious sentiment.

"This movement of Simpson's in theatrical affairs is one of the most important of the present day, and sets him before the world as a master spirit of the age. It is the beginning of a startling moral and religious revolution, by which religion will be brought back to the theatre . . . refined and purified of its paganism, united with art and taste, and a twin sister of the great moral movements of the age. In no other country of the world could such a movement have been contemplated, but in this country and in this age. . . .

"Here, in this land of liberty where every thought —every idea—every feeling—every doctrine—every movement is as free as the air of Heaven, or the eagle of the forest peaks, there is a chance that at last the house of the devil may be reformed and turned into a house of holiness, devoted to religious services. . . . This certainly is a new use to which to appropriate the Park Theatre. . . . In no other land could such a movement be attempted without causing a popular commotion of the fanatics—a revolution among the people—a fight between the good and evil principles

—a revulsion among the clergy. But in this happy country we are in a state of mental excitement, of moral and religious effervescence, of unadjusted elements of all kinds. . . . Go ahead!"

This editorial—in which the feverish concern of the age in all manner of religious experiments is clearly mirrored, even though through a mist of redundant sentences—brought forth a letter from a reader of the paper in which, finally, the principal reason for the avoidance of the theatre on the part of self-respecting households of the day is expressed in terms which leave only very little to the imagination. It is, to more reticent modern minds, a curious example of the puritan passion for shouting ungraceful things from the housetops, and revelling in the unvarnished terminology of ostensibly forbidden subjects.

After remarking that the production of a sacred drama at the Park Theatre was, indeed, a reminder of those early days when—

"the stage went hand in hand with religion and was its most powerful aid, and when the profession of actor was honored in proportion to its mental acquirements, *not as it is now a badge of disgrace,*" the writer goes on to explain that "there have been many causes acting through a long period of time which have produced this great change in the estimation in which actors are held; but none more powerful nor more degrading than the modern practice of appropriating a portion of the theatre for the accommodation of infamous women—making the theatre which should

be a temple for refined amusement and instruction an assignation house, a convenience for those whose presence is pollution. How can actors or managers expect that their profession will be treated with that respect certainly due to their intellectual efforts while this practice continues? How can Mr. Simpson expect to be rewarded by the patronage of families while he thus opens his theatre for the basest purposes? Look at the inconsistency of the production of a sacred drama in a temple devoted to the harlot. . . . Abolish the third tier—make the theatre respectable, let it no longer be a disgrace to the profession and the professors, the city, and society in general. . . ."

He does not say anything about the famous whispering gallery in the third tier at the Park, referred to by Mr. Haswell, which made it possible for practical jokers to inject disturbing remarks into the gallant negotiations conducted by all the young men about town with the denizens of that public harem. But it is quite obvious that "the patronage of families" would scarcely have been compatible with so open an arrival at such covenants.

The most interesting feature of this discussion, however, is that Mr. Simpson evidently took the letter to heart, for on the opening night the pit and dress circle were crowded, the second tier nearly full, *and the third tier empty,* "the manager having, for the first time in New York, put forth a moral courage unheard of and excluded the usual frail women who frequented that quarter." The general opinion at first was that the "courage of Mr. Simpson in purifying the third tier was a step that must attract the

attention of the moral and religious world." The Park Theatre was now, "in propriety, decorum, refinement, and moral entertainment a fit place for all the clergy and the most pious of their flocks to visit." The only question was whether there was "moral courage enough in the pulpit to approve the moral courage of the theatre."

The drama only ran for eighteen nights, and the third tier does not seem to have remained empty. . . .

5

And yet it was a decade of astonishing dramatic brilliance, of peculiarly great stars in every branch of acting. A decade which watched Fanny Elssler, Madame Celeste and Julia Turnbull; a decade which listened to John Collins, Braham and Ole Bull, to Mrs. Knight creating the part of the Gypsy Queen in *The Bohemian Girl,* to Mrs. Seguin in the title rôle on the opening night of *Maritana,* to Tedesco, Truffi and Benedetti, to Fanny Kemble Butler in her triumphant Shakespeare readings; a decade which saw Edwin Forrest, Charles Kean, Junius Brutus Booth, Macready, Tyrone Power, Hamblin, James Hackett, John Brougham, the Vandenhoffs, the Placides, Blakeley, J. R. Anderson, E. L. Davenport, Harry Lewis, W. R. Blake, Henry Wallack, John Lester Wallack, Mr. and Mrs. James Wallack, Fanny Wallack, Charlotte Cushman, Sarah Wheatley, Mrs. Charles Kean—beloved Ellen Tree of earlier days—Clara Ellis, Mrs. Winstanly, Mrs. Coleman Pope, Mrs. Henry Hunt, Julia Dean, Anna Cora Mowatt,

Mrs. Anna Bishop, Constancia Clarke, Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. Shaw, Mrs. Russell—Mrs. John Hoey to be, of the wonderful wardrobe, the fascinating *Rosalind,* the great *Pauline* of *The Lady of Lyons*—names taken almost at random from the stock companies of the Park, the Bowery, the Broadway, and the National. . . .

On those great New York stages of the day they were doing Shakespeare and Sheridan, over and over again; *Charlotte Temple, Jack Sheppard* and *Virginius; London Assurance, Old Heads and Young Hearts,* and *His Last Legs;* and setting the scenery repeatedly for *The Lady of Lyons,* so that Mr. Macready might come forward as *Claude Melnotte* and recite—

"Tonight sleep, sleep in peace.
Tomorrow, pure and virgin as this morn
I bore thee, bathed in blushes from the shrine,
Thy father's arms shall take thee to thy home . . .
Conduct this lady (she is not my wife;
She is our guest—our honored guest, my mother!)
To your poor chamber where the sleep of virtue
Never, beneath my father's honest roof,
Even villains dared to mar. . . ."

while *Beauseant,* the villain, possessed his soul in patience, knowing that at the final curtain his chance would come with—

"Fooled, duped and triumphed over in the hour
Of my own victory! Curses on you both!

May thorns be planted in the marriage bed,
And love grow soured and blackened into hate
Such as the hate that gnaws me . . .
I wish you joy, ha ha, the gardener's son!"

That wonderful Mr. Bulwer-Lytton! For when it was not *The Lady of Lyons* it was more than likely to be Mr. Forrest, as *Richelieu,* declaiming—

"Thou liest, knave,
I am old, infirm, most feeble, but thou liest!
Armand de Richelieu, dies not by the hand
Of man . . . Call them all—
Thy brother butchers! Earth has no such fiend—
No—as one parricide of his father land
Who dares in Richelieu to murder France!"

At the same time they were giving tremendous five act, historical, romantic tragedies, set as often as not in Italy or Spain—*Rinaldo Rinaldini, or the great Banditti; Octavia Bragaldi* and *Teresa Contarini;* Mr. Epes Sargent's *Velasco; Bianca Visconti, or the Heart Overtasked,* by Mr. N. P. Willis; *Jack Cade, or the Captain of the Commons; The Gladiator, The Three Dukes, or the Lady of Catalonia,* and *The Broker of Bogota.* Mr. Forrest often played the part of *Febro,* the Broker, no doubt for the pleasure of roaring——

"Hence, begone! And a deep curse go with thee, a father's curse! Get thee to fraud and crime, to theft and murder. Become notorious to thyself, and sleep, dreaming of gibbets, to wake up to racks. Rob

other sires of sons, bring woe on other houses, 'til the general curse heaped like a mountain on thy head reach Heaven and wall thee in its fiery hell forever! Hence, monster, hence!"

It was an agitating play, a large portion of whose plot is expressed in the following exchange between the Broker and his daughter.

Febro. "Come hither, Leonora. What, my girl, that stranger youth I bade thee see no more, dost thou still speak with him?"
Leonora. "Alack, dear father, I hope you are not angry. . . ."

But he was, extremely. On the other hand the stranger youth was most persistent in his attentions. "So to a cot we'll hie us," he informed his lady, "in some nook of a delicious valley where the mountains walling us with azure up to Heaven shut out all things but Heaven." To which *Leonora* was obliged to reply "Oh, Heaven be with me. . . . Ah! Hark! We are discovered." In other respects the play is strangely reminiscent of *The Merchant of Venice.* For after the Broker has had his vaults robbed by his favorite son he returns home to discover that his cherished daughter has eloped. "Sister, sister! Gone, oh vanished!" exclaims a younger brother. "Heaven, thou art awroth with us—what, sister, sister . . ." A condition of affairs which induces the Broker to remark "Fled, boy, fled—ha ha—eloped! Dishonored. . . . Drugged to the bottom! No gall and venom now but I must drink them! With a villain

fled! From shame to deeper shame, and in mine hour of misery, too! Oh, curse her, curse her. . . ."

The play comes to a sudden end after the receipt by *Febro* of the news of his miscreant son's suicide, whereupon he observes "God! God! God!" and dies, there being nothing else left to do after such a climax.

6

Dramas and comedies based on domestic history and local characteristics were not neglected. Mr. Stone's *Metamora* was still enormously popular. *Pocahontas,* Mrs. Conner's *The Forest Princess,* and *Ethan Allen, or the Green Mountain Boys of* 1776 played to enthusiastic houses. Mr. Noah's drama of 1812, *She would be a Soldier, or the Plains of Chippewa,* remained a great favorite. The play was full of gallant American officers, dastardly British, and noble Indians, revolving around the disguised character of *Christine,* whom nothing could keep from the wars, and more particularly from the neighborhood of her soldier lover *Lenox.* A splendid part, the latter, replete with declamatory opportunities.

"Not a word, dear General, not a word! I have merely done my duty and done no more than every soldier in our ranks. . . ."

The climax of the play must have occurred when *Lenox* came rushing out from his tent in time, and only just in time, to save *Christine,* the supposedly negligent sentry, from the firing squad—

Lenox. "Hold for your lives! 'Tis she, 'tis she, 'tis my own, my beloved Christine!"
Officer. "What means this?"
Lenox. "Stand off, ye cruel executioners, would you destroy a woman?"

Naturally, nothing was further from their minds, and, as the General observed, "all things were terminated happily," so that everyone concerned might feel towards Britain "as freemen should feel towards all the world, enemies in war—in peace friends." Tableau.

Among the comedies there were *Yankee Land* and *The Vermont Wool Dealer,* by Mr. Logan; *Rip Van Winkle, or the demons of the Catskill Mountains;* Mr. Dunlap's *False Shame, or the American orphan in Germany;* and finally, in 1845, by Anna Mowatt, the author of *Armand, or the Child of the People,* a really first rate satire on contemporary society called *Fashion, or Life in New York.* The play was an immediate success and may be said, with its sustained delineations of character—*T. Tennyson Twinkle, Seraphina Tiffany, Augustus Fogg,* and the rest—and its keen ridicule of current fashionable absurdities, to have been the first step of any importance in America towards the modern comedy of manners. Throughout the piece the prevalent habit of interlarding all polite conversation with French expressions is amusingly satirised.

"Is everything in order Millinette?" *Mrs. Tiffany* enquires of her French maid in her opening speech. "Ah, very elegant, very elegant indeed! There is a

jenny-says-quoi look about this furniture—an air of fashion and gentility perfectly bewitching. Is there not, Millinette?" To which *Millinette,* who has ideas of her own on the subject, dutifully replies "Oh *oui,* Madame. . . ."

The Gallic fad is made sport of again in the spirited altercation between *Mrs. Tiffany* and her long suffering husband at the beginning of the third act, in which perhaps for the first time the character of an extremely "tired" American business man appears upon the domestic stage.

Mr. T. "Your extravagance will ruin me, Mrs. Tiffany."
Mrs. T. "And your stinginess will ruin me, Mr. Tiffany. It is totally and *toot-a-fate* impossible to convince you of the necessity of keeping up appearances. . . . Merely because I required a paltry fifty dollars to purchase a new style of head-dress, a *bijou* of an article just introduced in France."
Mr. T. "Time was, Mrs. Tiffany, when you manufactured your own French head-dresses . . . but now you have grown so fashionable forsooth that you have forgotten how to speak your mother tongue. . . ."

Of course the French count turns out to be a valet and a cook, and the deluded *Seraphina* can only exclaim "To lose at once a title and a beau!" It must all have been extremely good fun.

7

Mitchell's Olympic Theatre was also at the crest of its popularity in the middle and last years of that

decade. It was primarily a stage devoted to burlesque and dancing, and to farce, on which a constantly changing program of three plays or skits was performed nightly before tremendous audiences from the East Side that stamped and shouted their approval, and, on Saturday evenings when the entire pit was given over to the newsboys of the city, cheered and howled with the enthusiastic vigor of practiced lungs. If they became too obstreperous Mr. Mitchell would threaten to raise the price of seats in the pit from the prevailing twelve and a half cents and the show would continue, with everyone, back of the curtain and out in front, having the time of his life. In the company, led by William Mitchell himself, were such men as Harry Horncastle, William Warren, Charles Walcot, William Conover, that matchless fun maker and practical joker George Holland, and the great Chanfrau, master of dialect and mimicry. And among the women, Miss Singleton, Mrs. Plumer, the beautiful Mrs. Baldock, Julia Turnbull, "little" Constancia Clarke, "Our Mary Taylor," and jolly, plump, sparkling Mary Gannon.

Skits on the order of *High Life below Stairs, The Cat's in the Larder, Stars at the Astor, The Captain's not a-Miss,* and *The Savage and the Maiden* were seen constantly; and such burlesques of popular plays and operas as *Mrs. Normer* (Norma)—*Sam Parr* (Zampa)—*Man-Fred* (Manfred)—*The Roof Scrambler* (Somnambula)—*The Bohea Man's Girl* (Bohemian Girl)—and *Buy it dear, 'tis made of Cashmere* (The Bayadere, or the Maid of Cashmere).

One would have enjoyed being there on the night Mr. Mitchell came out dressed as a ballet girl and danced a burlesque of Fanny Elssler's performance in *The Tarantula.* Mr. Mitchell called it *The Crack-a-Vien,* as a parody on the Divine Fanny's *Cracovienne,* and while in her impersonation Miss Elssler was supposed to portray the effects resulting from the bite of the tarantula, Mr. Mitchell, for his part, proceeded to illustrate the far more disturbing consequences of the mosquito bite. Mr. Mitchell never missed an opportunity of burlesquing every incident of the daily life of the town. When the traffic ordinance was issued governing the approach of carriages to certain theatres, and stating that the horses' heads should face in a specified direction, he solemnly included in his bill the notice that in approaching his theatre all horses should have their heads in front and their tails behind. A simple, boisterous wit, but spontaneous and timely.

Perhaps the biggest opening night the Olympic ever witnessed during that period was that of February 15, 1848, on which *A Glance at New York in* 1848, by Mr. Baker, the prompter at the Park, began its original unbroken run of seventy nights, a record stand in that day. Frank Drew had a small boy's part in the play, and in the person of *Mose,* and that of *Lize,* "that gallus girl," subsequently written in for Mary Taylor, dramatic use was made for the first time of the characteristics of the Bowery boy and his girl. Mr. Chanfrau created the part of *Mose,* the Bowery boy fireman, and in Mr. Brown's *History*

of the New York Stage one learns that he was so well made up that Mr. Mitchell mistook him for a loafer and was on the point of ordering him off the stage. The curtain went up and there he stood in his fireman's red shirt, a cigar in the corner of his mouth, his hair plastered down on his temples in the Bowery style—and, contrary to all custom in the presence of its favorites, not a sound came from the house. The audience had not recognised him, any more than had his manager! Suspiciously they eyed him until he spoke his first lines—

"I've made up my mind not ter run wid der mercheen any more. Dere's dat Corneel Anderson don't give der boys a chance. . . . Ses he, Get off der hose! Ses I, I won't get off der hose . . . and he hit me over der gourd wid his trumpet. . . ."

And then they recognised his voice. "Chanfrau!" they roared, and the performance stopped while from pit to gallery and back again they greeted him with a terrific din of delighted Hi—hi—hies. One of the funniest scenes must have been the one in which the current craze for fashionable ladies' bowling clubs was burlesqued, the stage directions for which reveal certain possibly forgotten features of then prevailing feminine manners.

"A ladies' bowling saloon, *bar at back.* A number of ladies playing at ten pins, dressed in plain white pants and blue blouses, and little black caps. Various ladies discovered, *all smoking cigars.*

"Yes, I have found that card playing, dancing, theatres, etc., were a bore, and the continual cry of

the doctor was 'You should take exercise,' so I determined on a bowling alley. . . . Our club now numbers fifty ladies of the first families in New York. . . . What do you think of our saloon—no men admitted, my dear . . .

"For pleasure, there's no denying,
Who can boast such a city as this,
You've no cause at our lot to be sighing,
So come, take a game with me, Miss,
I am sure, I am sure, you cannot resist!"

8

And, in addition to all this, they were doing melodramas. Splendid, soul satisfying, so to speak open air melodramas, in which heroines were never safe for more than two minutes at a time, though villains were foiled again and again, until the final curtain when death was almost invariably found to be the wages of sin.

"Hold, murdering villain! Richard Braxley, forbear!"

"Now, Rowland Forester, I defy thee!"

"Monster, hold—"

"Behold thy promised bride. Consent to make her mine, or down yon boiling cataract I'll hurl her to destruction. . . ."

That was in *Nick of the Woods,* one of the most popular melodramas of its day, in which *Nick,* alias The Jibbenainosay, alias Bloody Nathan, alias The Black Avenger, went storming up papier maché cliffs and down canvas torrents after *Wenonga,* "the Black

Vulture of the Shawnees." *Murdering coward, die a murderer's death. Blood for blood, remember the Avenger*—and in the last scene three corpses, to say nothing of a large number of unidentified Indians, came sliding into the concluding tableau.

These tremendous entertainments, frequently involving enormous casts and pretentious scenic and mechanical effects, were, if any classification is possible, of three sorts. There were the spectacles, such as *The Flying Dutchman, or The Phantom Ship, The Last Days of Pompeii, Mazeppa, Beauty and the Beast, The Wizard of the Wave,* "a grand nautical drama," and *Giselle, or the Willies,* "a fairy legend of love." A second class, difficult to separate from the first, was founded on incidents in history. In this category belong *Captain Kyd, or the Witch of Hell Gate, The Hawks of Hawk Hollow, Ivanhoe, or the Jew's Daughter, The Carpenter of Rouen, or the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Moll Pitcher, or the Fortune Teller of Lynn,* and *The Siege of Monterey, or the triumphs of Rough and Ready.* The notice of this "grand patriotic drama in three acts" gives an excellent idea of the character of the pieces in both of these classes, and also contains a reference to the "dream" feature so often introduced into these plays.

Fort Brown by Moonlight.

Chorus of soldiers. Our flag floats proudly. Taylor inspects the entrenchments. General Taylor's dream in four visions.

First Vision. Fall of Matamoras.
Second Vision. Capture of Monterey.
Third Vision. Bombardment of Vera Cruz.
Fourth Vision. Battle of Buena Vista.

The mist disperses and discovers Fort Brown at break of day. The Gallant Soldier aroused by the Reveille. His departure for Point Isabel. Bombardment of the Fort. Death of Major Brown. The Plains near Palo Alto at the termination of the first day's victory. Battle of Reseca de la Palma. American arms triumphant in the second contest. Walnut Springs. Rough and Ready encampment.
The entire area of the vast stage will be thrown open to aid in the scenic effect. Termination of the never to be forgotten Three Days' Fight.

Gorgeous Tableau.

Boxes, 25c. Pit, 12½c.

The third class consisted of what may be called domestic melodramas, concerned with the private adventures of more sedentary households, although even in these the plot frequently took the characters through far flung successions of scenes beyond the drop-curtained confines of their usually humble dwellings. Of this type were *Tortesa the Usurer,* by Mr. N. P. Willis, *The Mysteries of the Castle, or the Victim of Revenge* and those other *Mysteries of Paris; The Bottle, or Cause and Effect,* "a drama of the most heartrending and terrifying features" of the

popular temperance variety, whose only flaw in contemporary estimation was that it did not end in the reformation of the drunkard; *The Female Horse Thief, Theresa, or the Orphan of Geneva, Fauntleroy, or the Fatal Forgery,* and *Adeline, or the Victim of Seduction,* an adaptation from the French.

This lugubrious work opens to slow music, in "a garden before a small but beautiful mansion with shrubs, trees and flowers scattered picturesquely," with a shriek offstage followed by the entrance of *Adeline* who "totters" to a bench exclaiming "Great Heaven! Not wedded!" To which the faithful gardener who accompanies her replies "Come now, don't take on so—cheerly, Mistress, cheerly!" and a great deal of the antecedent plot comes out at once in *Adeline's* "Mistress! Oh, what a fatal meaning that word forces on me! Mistress! But yesterday the lighthearted, innocent, unsuspecting Adeline, today—Agony! Agony! Now I see the horror of my situation. . . ."

It was all because a noble lord, unmindful of the existence of a legitimate consort, spurred on by the base promptings of a wicked Baron, had insinuated himself in the guise of a drawing master, *Fabian,* into the house of *Dorlin,* the old blind soldier, there to betray into a false marriage the unsuspecting *Adeline.* And now *Adeline* has found out, and her whole attitude in regard to the matter is expressed in the following observations addressed to the Baron —"I know the appalling truth; release me from the spot where all is guilt and horror—unhand me, never

will I cross that threshold!" With the assistance of the honest gardener it is not long before the blind father puts in an appearance, and when the wicked Baron would prevent the rescue of *Adeline* by offering the gardener money to assist in disposing of the parental intrusion the latter exclaims "Not I! The gold that would stop the mouth that speaks for the helpless when oppressed is the purchase money of a curse!" Always a very popular speech.

In the second act, while the blind father is observing to his daughter that "you have not been candid with me, child! When a young girl has concealments from a parent there is cause to tremble"—and, at that, he only knew the half of it—*Adeline* is writing to *Fabian*—

"ere I yield to the last despair, I wish to see you. Until your lips have confirmed the fatal truth I cannot believe it. Come, restore peace to Adeline's heart and to my poor father's. Great Heaven, should it be true, you would bring two unhappy creatures to an untimely grave. I cannot live without loving you, but I cannot love you if you no longer deserve my esteem. Come and convince me that you still merit both! Your faithful Adeline—'til —death!"

More modern Adelines would, no doubt, have been writing to their lawyers in such an emergency. But before the letter is despatched *Fabian* himself arrives in a state of remorseful agitation and throws himself on his knees to *Adeline*.

Adeline. "Am I your wife?"
Fabian. "Yes, before Heaven!"
Adeline. "And—before—the—world?" *Fabian sobs deeply. Casts down his head. Adeline rises.* "Then it is so. . . ."

The interview is interrupted by the blind father who demands to know "Whence those emphatic sounds?" and while *Adeline* is coaxing him back into his room *Fabian* jumps into another just in time to avoid the untimely entrance of his lawful wife, the Countess.

Adeline. "May I ask, Madam, to what I am indebted for this honor?"
Countess. "Curiosity. . . . Intrigues should be managed more discreetly."
Adeline. "I am poor, Madam, but I must decline listening to such language. . . ."

But the Countess is very reasonable about it all after her first haughty curiosity is satisfied. "You have cause to weep, not to blush," she informs *Adeline* and promises to establish her, and her worthy sire, in a little cottage "far, far away." Of course the blind father has overheard everything, and, while *Adeline* is seeing the Countess to her carriage, he intercepts *Fabian* attempting to escape from this perilous neighborhood and fires pistols at him. "True, I am blind, but guided by Heaven and vengeance my hand can still strike death into your heart!" Bang, bang—but he only succeeds in splintering the woodwork. *Adeline* rushes in. *Fabian* rushes out.

Adeline. "Father! Grant me your pardon. . . ."
Father. "Take it, but on one condition."
Adeline. "Speak—"
Father. "Kneel down and utter what I command—May Heaven's bitterest curses follow the seducer!"
Adeline. "Hear not, oh Heaven, the accents of his wrath!"
Father. "Repeat—or indignation—"
Adeline. "Never! He has destroyed me, but I cannot curse him."
Father. "False girl! Let anguish wring thee! Anguish! Anguish!"

A big scene.

The stage directions for the third act call—to the great annoyance, one would imagine, of the stage carpenter—for:

"A vast garden. On the right hand a staircase winding up to the elegance of a rich rotunda, with large stained glass windows. . . . On the left, a splendid terrace resting on marble columns, between which are magnificent vases filled with flowers. In the background, a river, bordered with weeping willows, over which there is a very elevated Chinese bridge. Exotic plants and trees, picturesquely grouped, render the scene peculiarly beautiful and romantic."

When the elegance of the rich rotunda has finally been put in place, *Fabian's* parent is giving a party, during the course of which all the characters in the play pursue each other about the shrubbery in a series of confusing scenes of mistaken identity, until the blind father comes in to accuse *Fabian* of his crimes.

"On what grounds dare you cast such odium on a noble family?" someone rebukes him, and *Adeline* throws herself into the river and is brought onto the stage by four ladies to expire in her father's arms.

9

The Bowery Theatre, of course, was the scene of these hair raising events, and the Bowery itself the district that furnished the audiences which packed the house, especially on Saturday nights, from pit to gallery. That astonishing thoroughfare described by Mr. Haswell—filled with fruit stalls, cutlery displays, pawnbrokers, Cheap John auctioneers, saloons, cigar shops, roast chestnut vendors and sausages, illuminated by the glare of turpentine lamps and the lights on the fronts of the Atlantic Garden and of the Theatre—up and down which the Bowery boy of the Forties paraded truculently with his girl, Mose and his Lize. A fist fighting personage, industrious and sober six days out of seven, usually employed in the butcher shops, wearing a high beaver hat, the nap of which he parted and brushed in opposite directions, a bright colored silk handkerchief, a frock coat, and wide pantaloons, smooth shaven with the "soap locks," or "spit curls," greased and plastered down on his temples.

And on the seventh evening he went in his hundreds through the runway into the pit, or with Lize during their courting days, and with Lize and her babies afterwards, up into the gallery or into the gas-lit tiers of his "neighborhood" theatre, armed with

peanuts, and fragrant bologna, and pork chops the remnants of which he hurled playfully at his friends in the pit, to stamp his feet, and roar, and cheer, and hoot, and hiss to his heart's content, and cry Hi hi! at his favorites and Cheese it! when he was bored, and converse familiarly back and forth with the people on the stage from seven o'clock until midnight during the progress of the customary farce, melodrama and burlesque. All he asked—and Lize and the children shared his taste—was to be given a good Bowery laugh, a generous portion of blood curdling action, and some noble speeches resounding in his ears to send the shivers tingling down his romantic back. And an opportunity to exercise his lungs, and admire Lize in the person of the lovely heroine and himself in that of the undaunted hero—or possibly the dashing villain! A simple hearted, old fashioned audience, cherishing physical courage, patriotism, domestic rectitude, and feminine virtue.

One regrets not having been there in the gallery with the Bowery gods on the opening night, in 1845, of Mr. Bannister's *Putnam, or the Iron Son of '76*, an extraordinarily successful spectacular, historic melodrama, which ran for seventy-eight nights during its original engagement and held the stage for many years. One would so have enjoyed seeing the Prologue, if it was anything like the stage directions!

The Vision.

Slow music. Three quarters dark. Ethereal firmament filled with silver stars. Eagle flying

in the air, to ascend, looking down upon a lion couchant, on trap to descend. The goddesses discovered in various groups bearing blue wands with silver stars. God of War on small Roman chariot, to descend. Goddess of Liberty on trap in small Roman chariot, to descend.

She was dressed in "white merino demi train classic Roman dress; gold tiara; fleshings; scarlet sandals; scarlet drapery with gold border; spear and liberty cap; green palm bough for right hand."

CHORUS

We will be free, we will be free,
As the winds of the earth or the waves of the sea;
We'll bow to no tyrant, submit to no yoke,
But struggle like freemen 'til our fetters are broke.
Shout, shout! Let it echo on earth and o'er sea,
Our tyrant shall tremble, we will be free.

Music changes. Eagle ascends and lion descends. Goddesses dance around waving wands. Goddess of Liberty and Mars point to clouds. Clouds ascend and draw off. Lights up. The signers of the Declaration of Independence discovered. Ben Franklin at head of table. Music changes. Panels in flat above figures open and discover

Tableau.

General Washington and Major Putnam, Cadwallader, Greene, and American officers. White fire behind. Clouds descend.

CHORUS

No more in useless broils will we
Engage our hearts in sympathy;
But manly stand or manly fall
In the great common cause of all.
Raise now our banner high in air,
Behold, it floats in triumph there!

Clouds ascend and draw off. American flag discovered painted on flat.

CHORUS

Long may the stars in glory shine,
The sun of freedom, 'til the end of time,
Guide on our soldiers, 'til the battle's won.
Hail our chief, the mighty Washington!

Music changes. Clouds descend. The Goddesses dance off. God of War descends on left trap. Goddess of Liberty on right trap.

After which the serious business of the evening began, almost at once.

Guns and drums heard. "Hark, the Tories are about!"—"And see who rides so fiercely on that steed —'tis Putnam himself!"
Music. Putnam dashes on horseback—rum—ti—ti tum—ti—ti—tum—*leaps the gate, and falls on stage covered with blood.* A difficult entrance.
Clara. "Dear Uncle, you are wounded!"
Putnam. "A mere flea bite! Arm, boys, arm! The white skins and red skins are upon us! The war kettle boils! Three cheers, and upon them!"

Throughout the remainder of the play Mr. Milner, as *Putnam,* did nothing but dash frantically on horseback up and down staircases and across scenic obstacles of varying dimensions. On one of the few occasions when he was allowed to come out on foot he addressed George Washington in the following terms—"I have had some hot work, General, or I should have joined you before!" Whereupon he leaped into the saddle again and went flying off on some breathless mission. Hot work was no name for it. As for Mrs. Sargent in the rôle of *Clara,* tremendous things were all the time happening to her. Her appearance on the stage was always the signal for more dirty work at the crossroads, and she was perpetually being chased by wild Indians, casual British officers, and Mr. Junius Brutus Booth, Junior, playing *Talbot,* the Renegade. "Thou art my prize, proud scorner, and I will have thee. . . ." The British, of course, were constantly in trouble.

Cornwallis. "Plant well your cannon!"
Officer. "My Lord, the cannon are all spiked!"
Cornwallis. "Damnation!"

One thinks sympathetically of that officer who was obliged to speak that line seventy-eight times in succession without laughing. . . .

CHAPTER VII

WHITE KID GLOVES

1

When, finally, in 1847, a definite concern in the theatre was manifested by the fashionable world of New York—and New York was then already, as it is now, the dramatic centre of America—it was, as might perhaps have been expected, the Italian Grand Opera which experienced the organised patronage of society—a form of entertainment about which it knew practically nothing and which in the past it had failed consistently to appreciate.

There had been several desperate attempts in the city to establish Italian opera as a fashionable pastime, aside from the occasional appearances at the Castle Garden of Tedesco and Marini with the Havana Opera Company, none of which, perhaps, failed more dismally than the unfortunate Mr. Palmo's experiment at his own opera house. Here in less than a year, in spite of a carefully selected orchestra and a competent company headed by Borghese, the evening came, in 1845, when, upon the

entrance of the prima donna for her first aria, the musicians refused to play unless they were paid their salaries. After considerable argument in which the prima donna took a spirited part Mr. Palmo rushed around to the box office only to find the receipts for the night in the hands of a deputy sheriff. Mr. Palmo fainted in the lobby, and the curtain came down on Borghese courageously singing her aria without accompaniment. The company dispersed and Mr. Palmo went back to tending bars.

Now, suddenly, in 1847, the upper residential reaches of the town where fashionable life revolved immaculately around the railings of Astor Place became imbued with the desire to imitate the operatic splendors of London and Paris and establish their own, privately managed and carefully restricted, Italian opera house and company. What Mr. Palmo, with a very genuine affection for his native music, could never have accomplished, a number of genteel amateurs in frilled shirts, with the city directory before them, proceeded to achieve by the simple process of drawing up a list of those socially elect who might be permitted to subscribe a large sum of money annually towards the support of the enterprise, "a species of peerage of the fashionable society of New York, containing the birth, parentage, life, occupation, and pursuits of those who have organised society in New York on a similar footing as it exists in the high circles of the great capitals of Europe."

An opera house was constructed, known officially as the Astor Place Opera House, and unofficially as

the "Salle Astoria" until certain deplorable events fastened upon it the bloody name of "Massacre Place Opera House" from which it really never recovered. It was an "elegant house," profusely gilded and adorned with the inevitable chandelier, built to accommodate some eighteen hundred persons in its parquette, dress and family circles, and gallery, at a maximum price of one dollar for each unsubscribed ticket. In other respects it was arranged, so the critic of the *American Musical Times* found,

"with every convenience and luxury for the class for whom it was intended, and devoid of every comfort that common decency would have selected for that class the very name of which is offensive to aristocratic ears. In the dollar or subscription part of the house there are cushioned seats, luxurious lounges, and a perfect view of the stage from every seat. In the menagerie or fifty cent place the seats are hard and uncomfortable, and the gorgeous chandelier obstructs all view of any portion of the stage. This is as it should be; the common people are not wanted and their convenience has not been consulted. . . "

From the very first an influential portion of the press went out of its way to emphasise the aristocratic character of this venture, and to harp on the intended exclusion of the "unwashed million," in a manner which cannot have failed to produce its effect on the popular mind and facilitate the tragic events which were to follow. This attitude was due in large measure to one of the precious "rules" issued by the

committee of Managers whereby they attempted, though in the long run unsuccessfully, to abolish the free list for the press. The rules requiring smooth shaven faces, and evening dress, and white waistcoats and kid gloves, were considered sufficiently intolerant, but the proposed cancellation of the free list was nothing short of an attack on constitutional liberty.

To be sure here and there a newspaper such as the Charleston *Evening News*—for the matter was one of national discussion—pointed out that the rule was intended to—

"cut off what the managers have been pleased to term the mob of penny-a-liners who on one pretext or another make themselves free to all places of amusement. . . . The free list is really a serious tax on managers of prosperous houses even when limited to the press. There are no less than sixty persons in New York, Brooklyn and Jersey City who are legitimately entitled to free admission under the rule. Add the reporters, and penny-a-liners, and various hangers on and you will have more than two hundred."

And this in a theatrical world in which programs changed habitually every night, entailing constant reporting. But the general tone of the press was voiced by the *Times and Messenger* when it remarked that—

"the press is of too much importance to the interest of theatres to cavil about a few admissions. We feel for these poor artists . . . and the press, their natural

guardians and protectors, in a measure separated from them by the interference of quasi fashionables who build a theatre and then place the company under the iron rule of a committee. . . . Now a splendid house is erected to contain eighteen hundred persons—but will seldom have a thousand in it—and yet there is no room for all the editors unless they can afford to pay fifteen pounds sterling for a stall. It is mortifying to see men who have inherited or have made large fortunes so exclusive, so utterly deficient in policy and good sense, or who imagine that money, and not mind, controls the million. . . ."

In spite of which a company was imported from Italy, under the business managership of Mr. Sanquirico and Mr. Patti, consisting of such stars as Benedetti, Truffi, Biscaccianti, Amali Patti, Clotilda Barilli, and Catrina Barilli-Patti, the mother of Adelina, who made her début, oddly enough to modern operatic conceptions, in the rôle of *Romeo*. And on November 22, 1847, after the chandelier had refused to light for more than half an hour just as the people were coming in, the curtain went up for the first time on *Ernani*.

2

The performance itself does not seem to have been particularly noteworthy, but then the performance cannot have been of any fundamental importance compared to the spectacle provided by the audience. It was quite thoroughly understood that the only excuse for all this *coloratura* on the stage was the op-

portunity it afforded for a brilliantly colored display of fashion in the house. At seven o'clock—they came promptly in those days—the lower galleries, balconies and pit were completely filled with people in full dress. There was not a single gentleman present below the third tier who was not wearing white gloves, in the parquette they were all in frock coats, and in the lower tier white overcoats were to be seen. "The bouquets were in hundreds, the ladies all in dress opera toilette, and as they came in, in procession, the brilliancy of the crowd was remarkable." However, when they finally succeeded in turning on the gas for the overture,

"the dresses and ornaments of the ladies, so conspicuous while they were moving and standing, and while the light was dim, were lost as they sat in the boxes. The brilliant light was all absorbed and the eye entirely caught and filled with the show and glitter of the gilding and the prominence of the decorations."

Nevertheless, in spite of the *Evening Post's* conservative complaint that the opera house was too far up town and consequently "difficult of access to strangers," the press was forced to admit that this "magnificent movement in society" had produced "a great commotion all around," and that, on the inaugural night, not only was the Astor—

"crammed with beauty and fashion, but almost every theatre felt the effects of the excitement which that

event brought forth. Music or farce, tragedy or comedy, opera or humbug, seemed all to be equally affected with one general movement originating in the upper classes of society."

The opening was, in short, an event in fashionable annals, the first authentic organisation of the higher classes, "congregated under a splendid dome in a respectable quarter of the city."

In fact, the excitement was not confined to the city, or to any exclusive class of society. The establishment of Italian opera in New York was looked upon as a great event all over the country—even in Boston—and as "an advancement and progress of refinement in civilisation on the part of the higher classes" on the one hand, and of "art and sarcasm among the lower ones." It furnished—

"the greatest excitement of the present day, and employed as many pens, and produced as much controversy, not only among the fashionable and literary circles but in every rank of society down to the very newsboys and printers' devils, as any topic on this side of the presidential question or even the war with Mexico."

The audience and the dresses of the ladies were admittedly the most interesting and conspicuous part of the movement, and "as a place for well dressed and genteel people to congregate in on a cold evening the opera house seemed to possess great advantages." On the whole it was thought that the array of beauty

displayed at the Astor compared creditably with that to be seen in London, Paris, Naples, Milan, Vienna, Berlin or Venice, and while the costumes of the ladies might not possess—

"the same exquisite grace and finish that one found in the Salle Ventadour, still they contrasted favorably with those displayed in the Queen's opera house in London, although not so rich or vulgar, nor as full of jewelry, lace and bad taste."

3

Aside from that, as a practical venture, socially and operatically, it was considered a very dubious experiment. There were grave doubts as to the adequacy of the company and the soundness of the finances, and continued criticism of the constantly changing "rules" and the exclusive character of the undertaking. The subscribers were kept perpetually in the lime-light of publicity, and "the appearance of the house, and the politeness displayed in the corridors, saloons and retiring chambers" made a subject of continual discussion and frequent ridicule for the benefit of the excluded classes. Indeed, in two weeks' time the "beautiful temple of song" was already a good deal of a white elephant, in which the subscribers sat in rather solitary splendor dutifully exclaiming *bravi* and *brava* according as the activities on the stage seemed to call for such vocal manifestations of a possibly none too deeply sincere satisfaction. As

someone expressed it, people in general refused to sit in the menagerie *behind* the chandelier, or in the parquette *under* it.

And then in another two weeks' time, for no particular reason apparently except the volatile nature of the public temper and a desire on the part of the proletariat to invade this sanctum of the *haute noblesse,* the so called "canaille" were crowding the third tier to hear Benedetti in *Lucia di Lammermoor,* and the lovely Truffi in *Ernani,* and the beautiful Biscaccianti in *La Somnambula.* The Astor was become "a place of elegance, refinement, respectability, and fashion," and the whole town was determined suddenly to be seen within its sacred precincts, and view the forbidden magnificence of the grand tier.

"We are a great people. . . ." the *Herald* chuckled. "The soirées at Astor Place are the most brilliant, beautiful and extraordinary things that ever characterised fashionable society in New York. It is really a sight to see the house on a great night, independent of the opera, the prima donna or the tenor. The elite are carrying everything their own way and even the *canaille* are washing their faces, shaving themselves, and having their hair cut and pomatumed, and what is more, are actually putting on white kids and seating themselves in any and every part of the house where they can procure a seat for love or money. Boors are becoming gentlemen by the influence of sweet sounds and a congregation of beautiful faces. The follies committed by the management about the free list are nearly forgotten. . . ."

It must all have made poor Mr. Palmo sigh as he washed out his timberdoodle glasses. The New York Opera Company was even going on tour and exhibiting itself with great success in such backward centres as Boston and Philadelphia, where a sluggish public had not yet provided itself with domestic musical opportunities such as any Bowery boy in New York might enjoy for the price of a ticket and the temporary discomfort of a pair of white kid gloves. But Mr. Palmo's turn came to smile after all, because in spite of all these triumphs the management of the Astor was spending more money than it made, and found itself obliged, in April, 1848, to suspend production temporarily with twenty performances still due the subscribers. The theatre was taken over by Mr. Niblo and Mr. Hackett for the presentation of legitimate drama, and eventually Mr. Charles Macready was announced to appear upon its stage. . . .

4

It was Mr. Macready's third visit to these shores, and in certain circles the return of the eminent English tragedian was not greeted with any very great degree of cordiality. The tour was only undertaken, the *Herald,* for instance, decided,

"in consequence of his want of popularity and success in his own country. During the last few years Mr. Macready has sunk very much in public estimation, arising in part from his peculiar mannerism, daring

public taste, and eccentric private conduct. . . . Mr. Macready is one of those pets of the public who have been spoiled by too much praise and too much toadyism. . . ."

Mr. Macready, for his part, thought but poorly of America and Americans. Were not the vulgar wretches, he enquired in his diary, the stupid, unprincipled dolts of this country enough to drive a wise man mad? There were gentlemen—high minded, high hearted, cultivated gentlemen—in the country, but it was a land of blackguards. They were a coarse people, and no mistake, and the masses, rich and poor, were essentially ignorant and vulgar. It was, in fact, an odious country where taste and high feeling, and the spirit of a gentleman were understood and appreciated only by the helpless minority. "Let me die," he exclaimed, "in a ditch in England, rather than in the Fifth Avenue of New York here."

Perhaps, under the circumstances, Mr. Macready would have done better to have stayed at home, but his impressions of America were certainly not improved by incidents such as that in Cincinnati, where, during a performance of *Hamlet,* "a ruffian from the gallery threw into the middle of the stage the half of the raw carcass of a sheep."

He was, moreover, constantly annoyed and disgusted by "the vulgarity and low, coarse character of the newspapers"—especially when they printed statements to the effect that the *Hamlet* of Mr. Vandenhoff Senior was superior to his own. "What ignorant

and what conceited dunces in literature and art these people are!" For Mr. Vandenhoff Senior was an American actor, and American actors, in Mr. Macready's estimation, were "brutes, not intelligences." Ignorance made drunk would best describe them all, from Mr. Forrest downwards. And Mr. Forrest himself was "a blackguard, a thick headed, thick legged brute, an ignorant, uneducated man, burning with envy and rancor at my success."

Mr. Forrest, on the other hand, was publicly outspoken in his conviction that Mr. Macready was a miserable actor and a liar, even though he were a graduate of Eton. "I will not call you a liar, Mr. Macready, but I have proved you to be one by the very witnesses you summoned in your defense."

Already in November, 1848, the famous quarrel was in full swing in the newspapers, and Mr. Macready was being visited with riots in Philadelphia.

"An attempt is being made," the *Herald* remarked, "by some indiscreet friends of Mr. Forrest to revive the dispute that took place recently between him and Mr. Macready. Such a movement is exceedingly foolish. . . . Mr. Forrest and Mr. Macready have, each of them, a number of admirers of their respective styles of acting . . . and everyone capable of judging is aware that each of them has faults and excellencies, both as a tragedian and as a man. . . . It should be the object of the admirers of both to put an end to such an unseemly contention, and to unite again in the bonds of friendship the two greatest delineators of tragic character of the present day."

It is not the purpose of these pages, certainly, to determine the final merits of this ridiculous dispute which brought only discredit on both participants, and eventual disaster to a large number of individuals, many of them totally disinterested. Mr. Macready may or may not have stirred up the theatrical world of London against Mr. Forrest in 1845. Mr. Forrest undoubtedly did go to the theatre in Edinburgh and hiss Mr. Macready in his pet rôle of *Hamlet*. Mr. Forrest repeatedly admitted having done so and gloated over it. Mr. Macready, quite naturally perhaps, never forgave him. One's concern is rather with certain local social conflicts which developed out of the controversy, and for which the actual quarrel itself seems to have served merely as a fortuitous excuse. For, in considering that period of German revolutions and French street barricades, it is perhaps not so well remembered that the American metropolis, also, experienced its day of popular uprising, clearly recognisable under a disguise of professional partisanship.

5

The spring of 1849 passed in a flood of printed invective from both sides. When Mr. Macready was not writing denials Mr. Forrest was issuing cards. "Mr. Macready's production has been eulogised as dignified and gentlemanly. Gentlemanly forsooth! Why, it has not the merit of being grammatical, but I will not pause to consider the style. . . ." In

March, Mr. Macready concluded his farewell engagement at New Orleans with a complimentary dinner and a long speech, and here, the *Herald* observed, "it might be supposed that this highly important and interesting controversy would cease."

But the curtain, it was forced to acknowledge, had not yet fallen on the last scene of the last act of this flare-up in theatrical life.

"Mr. Macready is en route to New York for the purpose probably of performing an engagement at one of our principal theatres. What success he will meet with we cannot say; but we are informed that the friends of Mr. Forrest have determined to crowd the theatre on the first night and hiss him off the stage if they can accomplish it. This is what Mr. Forrest's friends have determined to do; but Mr. Macready's are not idle. They are determined on the other hand to support him to the utmost of their ability and in their turn to drive Mr. Forrest off the stage when he next makes his appearance in the city.

"Thus we go—"

and in a manner utterly incomprehensible to modern ideas of professional courtesy, to say nothing of public precaution.

"A dispute between two rival actors—one born in England and the other in America—is made a national question, and made to turn on national grounds. . . . Well, so be it. We hope, however, that this struggle will be the finale of the ridiculous business and that hereafter sensible people will allow rival play actors to fight out their quarrels by them-

selves and not interfere with what really should not concern them. Let us have a fair fight, and fair play. *Go ahead, spring chickens! Never say die, old boys!* The longest day has a sunset!"

These flippant observations, coming on top of the sheep's carcass in Cincinnati, disgusted Mr. Macready profoundly. "Pah!" he exclaimed, and packed his bags for New York in no very cheerful frame of mind. At the same time Mr. Forrest quietly packed his own, and came to town to open an engagement at the Broadway Theatre in such plays as *Richelieu, Jack Cade, The Gladiator, Richard III,* and *The Broker of Bogota.* Late in April the management of the Astor Place Opera House began to advertise Mr. Macready's forthcoming farewell engagement. "Forrest is now playing at the Broadway," the *Herald* took pains to remind its readers,

"and Macready is to make his last appearance at the Astor Place Theatre. Both of these gentlemen will thus be playing at the same time in this city. Some intimations have been given that the indiscreet friends of Mr. Forrest intend to make a rumpus on the appearance of Mr. Macready and thus avenge upon him the criticisms of the London press made upon the American artist some years ago. . . ."

The article closed with a high minded appeal to the friends of both actors to patch it up between them and avoid any further unpleasantness, and Mr. Forrest maintained publicly what was doubtless con-

sidered a dignified silence, but on May 1 the *Herald* accepted for publication in its Amusements column the following entertaining notice which may or may not have surprised Mr. Forrest when he read it—

> "To job actors. Wanted immediately, at an uptown establishment, likely to open occasionally for a few nights, a lot of journeymen job actors. Talent is of no consequence as they must look, walk, stand, and talk exactly as ordered by an eminent histrionic individual. They will be hired at low wages by the hour, day, week, or single job. Address Speculators, at Fashion's Folly, Eighth Street, New York.
> "N.B.—No persons absurd enough to respect themselves or their profession need apply."

Finally, on May 5, the Astor announced Mr. Macready in *Macbeth* for Monday night, May 7. On May 6 and 7 the Astor with Mr. Macready and Miss Pope, the Broadway with Mr. Forrest and Miss Wallack, and the Bowery with Mr. Hamblin and Mrs. Shaw, all announced *Macbeth* for the evening of May 7. Mr. Forrest's action was unquestionably deliberate and ill intentioned. Mr. Hamblin's, on the other hand, was the result of an arrangement with Mr. Macready whereby, for the purpose of placating the public, Mr. John Ryder, an English actor of Mr. Macready's company, was loaned to Mr. Hamblin to play *Macduff* while his place was taken by Mr. C. W. Clarke of Mr. Hamblin's company. Everyone held

his breath, and the *Herald* advised the Astor audience to be in their places early "as the house would likely be crammed. . . ."

6

All three theatres were crowded. At the Bowery, an extremely enthusiastic and fashionable audience received Mr. Hamblin and Mr. Ryder. At the Broadway, "Mr. Forrest was greeted with a magnificent house, consisting of a large portion of elegantly dressed ladies," which welcomed him with thunderous cheers spiced with groans for Macready. At the Astor, "as soon as the doors were opened a very large number of persons altogether of the male sex entered the theatre and took their seats in different parts of the house." It began to be whispered about that "something was up," and the sudden appearance of Mr. Matsell, the Chief of Police, with a large body of constabulary seemed to confirm the rumor.

The curtain went up, and the pandemonium which was to endure for three acts began. When *Macbeth* entered, "the uproar was deafening; a perfect torrent of groans and hisses assailed Mr. Macready, and a deluge of asafoetida was discharged upon him from the gallery," to say nothing of bad eggs, apples, potatoes, lemons, pieces of wood, and copper cents which Mr. Macready solemnly picked up. There were cheers for Mr. Forrest. There were cheers for Mr. Macready, whose friends in the audience actually outnumbered the others. Mr. Macready stood quietly in the middle of the stage eyeing the disturbance. "Off,

off!" they yelled at him, while his partisans urged him to "Go on, go on!" Mr. Macready tried to make a speech and found himself confronted with banners. "No apologies, it is too late!"—"You have ever proved yourself a liar." The first two acts passed in dumb show while the rioters bombarded the company and roared "Down with the English hog—take off the Devonshire bull!" During the intermissions they sang snatches of the witches' chorus, and "Where's Eliza Brown?" which soon turned into "Where's Macready?"

Mr. Matsell and the constabulary looked on.

In the third act the uproar increased. Mr. Bill Wilson, a pugilist who had trained "Yankee Sullivan," threw a chair at Mr. Macready from the gallery. Mr. Macready bowed and smiled. Mr. Bill Wilson threw another chair at him. Mr. Macready "stood quite unmoved—not the slightest tremor visible—not the least bravado either." In fact Mr. Macready behaved throughout with extraordinary dignity and courage. Someone finally threw a third chair at him which very nearly hit his leading lady. Mr. Macready bowed to the audience, stepped up to the stage manager, whose name happens to have been Chippendale, and told him that he considered his own obligation fulfilled and would now no longer remain on the stage, and the curtain came down.

Outside, in Astor Place, a great crowd was thundering at the doors. Mr. Matsell caused the entrances to be barricaded and the audience, including the ladies, all of whom had remained until the end,

were hurried out through the Eighth Street exit. On behalf of the American members of the company, who had been told to stop playing with Mr. Macready, Mr. Clarke—who no doubt wished that he were safely back in his proper place at the Bowery Theatre—came out and apologised for his colleagues and explained that his family were dependent on his work. His apology was cordially received. In his dressing room, Mr. Macready, anticipating danger in the streets, took up his dirk, "but thinking it unworthy to carry it threw it down again." One begins definitely to like him at this moment. Accompanied by Mr. Colden, Mr. Tallmadge and Mr. Robert Emmett he walked home unmolested through quiet back streets. . . .

7

In commenting on the disturbance two days later the *Herald* was not of the opinion that Mr. Forrest was responsible or had hired rowdies to interrupt Mr. Macready's performance. "Perhaps he does not regret it very much," it remarked. "Let Macready now proceed peaceably with his engagement." In the same issue it printed a copy of the resolution sent to Mr. Macready by some forty prominent citizens, including Silliman, Noah, Irving, Duyckinck, and Herman Melville, assuring him that "the good sense and respect for order prevailing in the community will sustain you on the subsequent nights of your performances."

Encouraged by these protestations of sympathy

Mr. Macready announced *Macbeth* again for the evening of May 10, Mr. Hamblin also repeating his performance, while Mr. Forrest contented himself with *The Gladiator*. At the same time Mr. Macready published in the *Herald* all the documents relating to his quarrel with Mr. Forrest in an attempt to disprove the allegations made against him. Throughout the city, meanwhile, a fiery poster had made its appearance, in which are to be seen the first indications of a more significant motive underlying the popular hostility to Mr. Macready.

WORKING MEN
Shall
AMERICANS
or
ENGLISH RULE
in this city?

The crew of the British steamer have
threatened all Americans who shall dare to
express their opinion this night at the
English ARISTOCRATIC Opera House!
We advocate no violence, but a free expression of
opinion to all public men.

WORKINGMEN! FREEMEN!
Stand by your
LAWFUL RIGHTS!
American Committee.

"Shall an organised mob or the public authorities conquer?" the *Herald* exclaimed. "We do not believe there will be any successful attempt to drive Macready from the stage tonight. . . . The rioters will be well licked tonight or the city will be disgraced."

The public authorities and the Mayor, who had only been in office a few days, twiddled their thumbs. Mr. Matsell collected as many policemen as possible and marched them to the opera house. The late afternoon turned into evening and thousands of otherwise intelligent people began to stroll in the direction of Astor Place. . . .

8

Mr. Macready, relying on the assurances of the committee of citizens and on the comforting sight of Mr. Matsell's assembled policemen, went gaily to the theatre. He was annoyed at the tardiness of his hairdresser, but when his cue came he stepped onto the stage "with full assurance, confidence and cheerfulness." He was enthusiastically received, although there was some opposition from the parquette. Mr. Macready laughed at the "scoundrels," pointing them out with his truncheon to the police who crowded the house, and his supporters leaned a placard against the side of the proscenium stating that "The friends of order will remain silent." So the first three scenes were given, rapidly and inaudibly, and at the end of the fourth the police closed in on the rioters in the parquette and rushed them out of the auditorium

amid the cheers of the audience. If the militia, who, unknown to those inside the theatre, were gathering in Astor Place, had acted with equal promptness the evening might have passed pleasantly enough.

As it was, the first shower of stones from outside came smashing through the Eighth Street windows towards the close of the first act. Throughout the next three acts the bombardment continued practically without intermission, while the galleries kept up a continuous roar, "aided by the crashing of glass and boarding from without." Water was pouring from broken pipes into Mr. Macready's dressing room, and stones flying through the demolished windows were striking the famous chandelier. The audience was seeking shelter under the balconies, although very few persons actually left the house. At the front doors, where Mr. Matsell was having his hands full, the populace was pounding on the barricades and howling "Tear it down! *Burn the damned den of the aristocracy!*"

On the stage they went ahead with the performance in an amazingly devoted and courageous manner. Once, in the middle of the banquet scene, Mr. Povey urged that part of the play be cut, and Mr. Macready indignantly refused. "No cuts!" he ordered. He had consented to appear and proposed to go through with it, and as for the audience, they had paid their money and were entitled to the full performance as long as they cared to remain. One can only marvel at the fortitude displayed by the entire

company, playing inaudibly to a terrified audience in a wrecked house besieged by a screaming mob. The occasion contributes an inspiring, and altogether admirable, page to the annals of the profession, in the days when the play was the thing. A little quiet came with the fifth act and the remaining scenes were heard. Mr. Macready was called, and warmly cheered. "I quitted the New York stage," he says, "amid the acclamations of those before me. . . ."

They imagined, probably, that the decreasing intensity of the bombardment was due to a gradual cessation of the disorder in Astor Place. As a matter of fact the showers of stones were clattering less frequently upon the façade of the opera house because the rioters were now busy hurling them at the militia. They made excellent targets, standing there in close order trying to decide what to do next, and the hoodlums were enjoying themselves thoroughly, and, as they supposed, in that perfect security which such gentry are accustomed to consider a prerogative of their class, when suddenly the militia came to a startling, if inevitable, decision.

"Ready, aim, fire!"

The first volley was blank. "Yah!" The second volley was aimed high. It was all a bluff—the paving stones went flying. A block away a middle aged man was getting off a street car, wondering what it was all about. Down a side street a child came running to see what the soldiers were doing. The third volley was grimly genuine. The middle aged man fell

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THE GREAT RIOT AT THE ASTOR PLACE OPERA HOUSE, MAY 10TH, 1849

from the car; the child never found out what the soldiers were doing. When the acrid smoke had drifted away there was blood on the sidewalks of Massacre Place—women and boys were hurt, some twenty persons were dead—the white kid gloves of the audience seemed terribly incongruous. A great silence passed over the square. . . .

The sound of the first volley reached Mr. Macready in his dressing room, where Mr. Colden, Mr. Robert Emmett, Mr. Sefton, Mr. Chippendale, and several others were discussing with him the possibilities of escape from the building. "Hark! What was that?" he asked. Someone rushed in with the news. Two more volleys were heard. "My God!" he exclaimed, and determined "to meet the worst with dignity." At the earnest entreaty of his friends he finally consented to disguise himself. He took a drab surtout from one, while Mr. Sefton was ripping his own cap up the back so it would fit him. With Mr. Emmett he went to the stage door where they were stopped. They came back across the stage and down into the orchestra, climbed over into the parquette, and followed the stragglers from the audience up the centre passage. Everyone was being ushered out through the Eighth Street door, and they passed unnoticed through the crowds, across Broadway and along Clinton Place, to Mr. Emmett's house. "You are walking too fast!" Mr. Macready whispered once or twice to his friend. When they reached the house Mr. Emmett locked the front door and assured Mr.

Macready that he was safe. "You may depend upon all in this house. . . ."

In the Square the throngs were slowly dispersing as the military closed in on the opera house. The dead and wounded were being taken away. In front of the New York Hotel where Mr. Macready had his rooms an ugly crowd was threatening to burn the building. The manager told them to come in and see for themselves that Mr. Macready was not there, while Mr. Colden slipped up to his friend's room to fetch him a hat to replace Mr. Sefton's cap. An omnibus went careering up Broadway followed by a mob yelling that it was Mr. Macready running away. In Astor Place men were shaking their fists at the people who were wearing kid gloves, and making passionate speeches to anyone who cared to listen.

"You can't go in there," one man cried, "without kid gloves on. I paid for a ticket and they wouldn't let me in because I hadn't kid gloves and a white vest, damn them!"—"I luxuriate in the scene," said another. "Hurrah! I will have nothing to do with breaking windows, but I luxuriate in the scene!" On one street corner a little gentleman in evening clothes was imprudently voicing the original theory that mobs must be put down. "To hell with you!" a Bowery boy told him. "America rules England tonight, by Jesus!"

The affair had already progressed a long way from the original quarrel between two individuals to

whom the *Tribune* referred as "an English play actor and an American ditto, each eminent in his miserable vocation. . . ."

It was said afterwards that Mr. Macready had fled from his hotel on horseback disguised as a soldier and escorted by several mounted officers. He did nothing of the sort. While he was waiting in Mr. Emmett's drawing room Mr. Colden came in and warned him that he had better leave the city at once. Young Richard Emmett was sent to a livery stable to order a carriage and pair "to take a doctor to some gentleman's house near New Rochelle" at four o'clock that morning. Then they waited. At ten minutes past four the carriage came to the door—a covered phaeton. Mr. Macready shook hands with them all and stepped in. The carriage turned up Fifth Avenue passing a few early market carts. The most trying time of all must have been those last ten minutes. . . .

9

The citizens of New York had a great many things to think about the next day. In general the bitterest resentment was voiced not against the soldiers, but against the committee of citizens who had persuaded Mr. Macready to appear, against the management of the opera house which had permitted the performance to take place, and against "the damned aristocracy" for whose protection the militia had been summoned. The real motive of all the trouble was at last coming

out, and found expression in another fiery poster which blossomed forth all over the city.

AMERICANS!

Arouse! The Great Crisis
Has Come!
Decide now whether English
ARISTOCRATS! ! !
and
FOREIGN RULE! !
Shall triumph in this
AMERICA'S METROPOLIS
or whether the
SONS

whose fathers once compelled the base-born miscreants to succumb, shall meanly lick the hand that strikes and allow themselves to be deprived of the liberty of opinion so dear to every true American heart.

AMERICANS! !

Come out! And dare to own yourselves sons of the iron hearts of '76! ! America.

Another less hysterical placard called for a meeting that evening in the Park of all those opposed to the destruction of human life, at which resolutions were passed demanding the indictment of the Mayor, the Recorder and the Sheriff for having ordered the

militia to fire on the citizens, and a motion adopted whereby it was—

"resolved, that while we are opposed to all violence in theatres or elsewhere, we still insist that citizens have a perfect and indisputable right to express their approbation or disapprobation in all places of public amusement; and we regard the arrest and imprisonment of persons last night for merely expressing their opinion in the opera house as only surpassed in atrocity by the outrage perpetrated outside among the people."

An illuminating statement, surely, as regards the popular attitude towards theatres and actors.

Whereupon a certain Captain Rynders arose and explained why "this murder" had been perpetrated.

"To please the *aristocracy* of the city at the expense of the lives of inoffending citizens—to please an *aristocratic* Englishman backed by a few sycophantic Americans. It was more important to these *aristocrats* that Mr. Macready, an Irish-Englishman, should play before them than that they should prevent a riot. . . ."

In other words, the usual fallacious theory, which is so often evident in American social controversies, that because a lawful and proper activity is threatened with violence by an unruly minority it must therefore suspend or be held responsible for such violence as may result. Mr. Mike Walsh then addressed the multitude.

"Where," he asked, not without justice, "where were these national guards during the late war with Mexico? Where were those gingerbread soldiers? They were drinking punch at their firesides while it was the poor man who fought the battles of the country. . . . No doubt there are thousands like the Mayor who are drinking the blood of the operatives, who long for the power of an army with which they may oppress and trample the poor man under foot."

It was all quite modern in its distorted demagogy. But it becomes very apparent that the attack on the opera house was much more a matter of class hatred than it ever was one of personal partisanship. *Burn the damned den of the aristocracy!* Mr. Forrest's popularity with the Bowery boys itself rested not so much on the perfections of his acting as on the fact that he was at his best in such rôles as *Jack Cade, Spartacus* and *Metamora* in which he appeared as the champion of the masses, and declaimed impassioned speeches which they instinctively removed from their context and applied to contemporary society.

"We toil to feed their lusts, we bleed to back their quarrels, coin our sweat and blood to feed their wassail and maintain their pomp! And they, kind, gentle, gentle lords—in payment plunder our dwellings, spurn us as their dogs, stain those we love, and mock at our affliction. . . ."

It was perhaps symbolic that he should have been playing *Spartacus* on the night of the riot. At all events, the same spirit which had rolled General Har-

rison into the White House in 1840 drove the aristocrats to their homes on that evening in 1849. Log cabins and elliptical saloons, bare fists and white kid gloves. . . .

10

Little by little the press sorted out its ideas concerning the pitiful events in Astor Place, in the residences bordering which "the domestics discussed the affair as keenly as the respectable and comfortable occupants of those magnificent and elegantly furnished abodes of luxury and opulence." On the whole the newspapers all over the country approved the action of the authorities in firing on the rioters. "There is but one medicine for a mob, *viz.* lead."

The *Herald* was of the opinion that the riot would never have occurred if the innocent spectators had stayed away. "An idle curiosity to see what may be done by a riotous assemblage is not to be indulged in with impunity." Whereupon, in a manner highly characteristic of the vitriolic journalism of the day, the *Herald* launched into a furious attack on the *Tribune*—

"which has been assiduously engaged in disseminating the most anarchical and destructive doctrines. . . . How are we to estimate the mischief which may have been wrought . . . by this continual harping upon the tyranny and oppression of the rich—this perpetual prating about the overshadowing iniquity of capital—this artful contrasting the ill requited toil of one class with the voluptuous ease of another—those

devilish insinuations that the working man and the poor man . . . have all been robbed by the rich who are represented as living in luxury purchased by the sweat, and toil, and agony of their fellow men?

"To ridicule and expose the follies . . . of certain portions of the opulent classes of society is one thing, to denounce them as robbers and tyrants another. But to inflame the passions and blind the judgment of the poorer classes . . . is a crime of the most atrocious character. . . . The late fearful riot has opened up a new and alarming subject of investigation, and that is how far the anarchical socialism of the *Tribune* . . . has operated in this community in unsettling the foundations of law and order and arraying the poor against the rich. . . . Do we now really see the beginning of socialism in America?"

All very far removed from the question of Mr. Macready's veracity. But Mr. Greeley was quite able to take care of himself, in much more effective prose, and without mentioning any names either.

"The most direct agency of disorder," he observed, "is yet to be spoken of. We mean the licentious, unprincipled and venal Press . . . which panders to depraved appetites, traffics in falsehood and calumny, speculates on dishonor, gloats over vice, and does its utmost to weaken the moral sense of the public and bring the Law into contempt. Who will estimate the part which this branch of the newspaper Press has had in bringing about the Astor Place riots?"

Mr. Greeley would seem to have covered everything. Looking back on it all, one wonders whether

Mr. Forrest ever regretted having gone to the theatre that night in Edinburgh to hiss Mr. Macready. White kid gloves, and a child running down a side street to see what the soldiers were doing. . . .

CHAPTER VIII

PRODIGIES AND TAMBOURINES

1

For those to whom the theatre remained an iniquity, and the Italian Opera a mere waste of breath, there were numerous means of innocent, and at the same time instructive, enjoyment.

There was, in the first place, an unending procession of moving dioramas and panoramas. A Sea Storm and Destruction of an American Packet; The Mississippi River painted on Three Miles of Canvas; A Snow Storm and the Monks of St. Bernard; The Burning of Moscow; The American Army in Mexico; The Sublime Spectacle of the SIX DAYS OF THE CREATION, exhibiting by means of movable figures, scenery and powerful optical effects all the progressive changes from Chaos and Darkness, terminating with the appearance of ADAM AND EVE IN THE GARDEN, and closing with a grand diorama of THE DELUGE; and—

THE MIRROR OF THE WORLD!

25,000 square miles of scenery, on five miles of canvas. The colossal panorama of the Voyage Round the World, and occupying

FIVE MILES OF CANVAS

is at length open to the public at the Minerva Rooms. This immense world picture is a continuous pictorial voyage round the world, commencing and ending at Boston, and containing real views in the United States, Oregon, Sandwich Islands, Ice Islands, Kamschatka, China, East Indies, Egypt, Constantinople, Europe, Atlantic Ocean, and so home.

There was a succession of concerts, such as the famous, and extremely fashionable, Niblo promenades held in his brilliant conservatory; there were innumerable lectures, principally on animal magnetism and phrenology, and countless dissertations on religious and moral subjects, with which to counteract the unsavory attractions of the gambling and bowling saloons, and of the depraved Five Points resorts in New York, and of such popular vulgarities as horse racing and prize fighting—a pastime which, like the theatre itself, could not be said to enjoy the patronage of families. In fact, when Mr. Sullivan fought Mr. Hyer, in 1849, the event was greeted in censorious verse by the New York *Tribune*.

"What means this strange and barbarous tale
Which makes such stir in every street?
Why throng these crowds, with visage pale,
With eager ear, and hurrying feet?
It is a sweet and pleasant story
That men by men like dogs are handled,
That human flesh, all bruised and gory,
Is thus deformed, and gashed, and mangled,
While gaping brutes stand by to see,
And gloat on human misery . . .

Friends of fraternity and love,
Republicans, and tyrant haters,
Awake and hasten to reprove
This shameful strife of gladiators!
Let the free press its trumpet sound,
And brand these reptiles with disdain
Who dare profane our hallowed ground.
Oh, brand them with the mark of Cain,
Let 'Sullivan' and 'Hyer' be
Bywords of utter infamy!"

2

They took some things so seriously in the Forties, and set up such mountainous molehills for themselves. While the *Tribune* was fulminating against prize fighters, the *Herald* had equally interesting observations to make about the polka.

"The polka that is now danced," it remarked, "so gracefully in the fashionable assemblies of New York, Saratoga and Newport has gone through the same

cycle as the Model Artists, until public propriety has become so outraged that in all probability it will soon be consigned to a similar doom."

The polka had been introduced into fashionable society in 1844 by the celebrated Mr. Korponay, a retired officer in the Hungarian army, and had become the rage all over the country.

"But the polka as now danced in our most highly respectable and fashionable circles is one of the most indecent, immodest and scandalous exhibitions ever exhibited out of the common gardens of Paris, and can only be paralleled by the dances to be seen there at three or four o'clock in the morning at the Chaumière or the Château Rouge." This polka was nothing but "the lowest and most vulgar movement danced in the villages of Hungary, and in the encampments of the soldiery who, in consequence of the spurs attached to their boots, are obliged to move their feet in a certain uneasy and strange position so as not to endanger their legs. Such is the origin of the polka, and yet our fine young men and our beautiful young ladies can be seen vieing with each other who shall dance with the greatest vigor and accuracy this low camp dance."

The first Model Artists, the *Herald* recalled, had led the way to—

"the gross, vulgar and obscene exhibitions which disgraced not only the theatres and public places of amusement, but the saloons and ball rooms of the

higher classes in this country. The polka as danced at Newport is not in any degree less objectionable than those other exhibitions—indeed it is rather more so, for while purity and modesty would shrink abashed from outrage when Model Artists were exhibited, the conventional usage of society has thrown its protection over the Hungarian camp dance."

The real truth of the matter was that—

"our fashionable circles, who pretend to such extraordinary refinement, are wholly destitute of cultivated taste, polished manners, or moral feelings sufficient to check the introduction of foreign licentiousness and corrupt manners. . . . We must say that the indecency of the polka as danced at Saratoga and Newport stands out in bold relief from anything we have ever witnessed among the refined and cultivated *ton* of European cities. It even outstrips the most disgraceful exhibitions of the lowest haunts of Paris and London. . . ."

So much for the polka, which one used to be taught at dancing school as a picturesque, old fashioned measure. Queen Victoria, of course, forbade it to be danced in her presence. One can only wonder at the destiny of modern dancing. For, if in the Forties they considered the polka, which one now understands to have been comparatively innocuous, an obscene exhibition, then it is not improbable that a future age will smile patronisingly upon certain steps which shock present day susceptibilities and will teach them to its children as examples of bygone grace and

charm. And in that case, what sort of dances will they be dancing themselves in that age!

3

For lighter entertainment there were all manner of halls and concert rooms, so called, in which all kinds of exhibitions, wax works, mechanical models, dancing, magic, acrobatics, circuses, and trained animals were presented. And then, particularly in New York, there were the Gardens, where the summer shows were given. The Vauxhall; the Atlantic on the Bowery, which was primarily a German beer garden and a favorite resort of stout Teutonic families who brought their children with them; Niblo's, where for the first time, in June, 1844, the famous polka was danced by Miss Mary Taylor and Mr. Wells; and, of course, the Castle, just off the Battery, which had once been a fort and was destined to become an aquarium, and which heard the enchanting echoes of Miss Jenny Lind's first song.

Cool, pleasant, inexpensive places where one went to stroll about the grounds and around the arbored shrubberies festooned with lights, and watch the fountains and listen to the band; to sit at little green tables, or in white painted boxes, and eat ices and fruit sherbets; to pass an hour or so in the auditorium and see the burlesque, or the tight rope dancer, or the pantomime. The great Ravels in *The Green Monster,* and *The Patineurs,* in which roller skating was seen for the first time, and *Mazulme, or The Night*

Owl; THE NATIONAL ALLEGORY, in which the whole company will assist in order to illustrate the proud and just position of AMERICA among the nations of the world, and in which FAME! with her golden trump will be seen with expanded wings, proclaiming the victories of the United States and her justice and mercy to the conquered; Herr John Cline, the famous slack wire artist; *Diable Rouge, or the Fairy of the Rhine,* and *The French Spy, or the Wild Arab of the Desert;* and—

THE
GREAT AND STARTLING
novelty of the
WONDER FROM MEXICO!
SENOR MIGUEL FEA!!

The amazing power of equilibrium and the rapidity mingled with graceful execution of the most marvelous feats while sustained only on the

TIGHT WIRE!

have induced the proprietors to secure this rare foreigner in order to gratify the curiosity everywhere awakened in his profession. El Senor Miguel will ascend the Tight Wire and execute his series of brilliant Spanish dances, The Grand Salute, The Sombrero y Plumas, The Supernatural Palma, with a variety of classic postures, as beautiful as they are surprising.

© Jacques & Bros.

CASTLE GARDEN

From a lithograph

And always at the close a grand display of fireworks.

It must have looked very pretty, on summer evenings, from the ships anchored in the Bay, and from the heights of Brooklyn and Hoboken. Chinese fans, Maltese crosses and Mexican suns; Illuminated Yew Trees with waved branches of silver fire decorated with rosettes of crimson, green, orange, purple, and gold communicating from a splendid revolving sun of Jessamine, Palestine and Rayonant Fires; caprices, torbillions, saucissons, grasshoppers, and jostic double headers; Pyramids of Roman Candles commencing with a splendid Hexagon Vertical Wheel of silver fire changing to a superb pyramidical display of Roman Candles diverting their fires upwards of two hundred feet in the air, ASTONISHING THE SPECTATORS; serpents, bengolas, flower pots and saxons; Mosaic Pieces commencing with a beautiful Pentagon Wheel of colored fires changing to a splendid piece of Mosaic with revolving illuminated centre of crimson, green and purple, and terminating with a grand Feu de Joie. . . .

Or else it might be—at an increased price, perhaps as much as fifty cents—one of those episodes of death and destruction, the contrast of which with their own placid security the citizens of the Forties so enjoyed appreciating. Something on the order of THE GRAND ERUPTION OF MOUNT VESUVIUS, "one of the most extensive and splendid pieces of Fireworks ever produced in this or any other

country, in a scene covering a space of Twenty Thousand Square Feet."

The piece opened with a panoramic view of Naples with its beautiful bay, "the shores studded with Marble Palaces of the Nobility, their extensive Gardens, Pleasure Grounds and Grottoes, presenting a pleasing and enchanting scene of luxury and repose," and one in which the democratic spectators would be sure to delight. In the distance—

"frowns the awful summit of Vesuvius, in silent and terrific grandeur, occasionally emitting volumes of smoke, giving indication of approaching desolation and ruin. At the base of the mountain is the little town of Portici, built on the site of ancient Herculaneum; scattered around are the hamlets of the peasantry, inclosed and surrounded by their luxurious vineyards; while the remains of depopulated villages, ruined palaces and demolished temples tell the sad history of the devastation and ruin of bygone days."

The deep interest of the scene, it seems, increased by slow and almost imperceptible degrees—

"the low mutterings of the distant thunders, accompanied by fitful flashes of unearthly fires from the summit of Vesuvius bespeak the approaching convulsion; more and more frequent, vivid and intense appear the appalling fires from the crater. The adjoining hills begin to smoke—terrific noises are heard from the bowels of the earth—amid the uproar of lightnings and thunders old Vesuvius asserts her sway and pours out her hidden stores of destruction."

And now "the flames issue in tremendous masses from the summit of the crater. Balls of vivid fire are thrown into the surrounding atmosphere"—this part of the performance must have kept the stage hands extremely busy—

"loud and incessant explosions follow each other without intermission—the mountain is cleft from its summit to its base—the last reservoir of its internal fires is disclosed—the burning element is poured out like water over the surrounding country, overthrowing and destroying alike in its progress the proud palace of the noble and the humble cottage of the peasant—the fiery torrent descends into the plains below—the vineyards are uprooted—the palaces are overturned —in its progress the villages are wrapped in flames and one general conflagration covers all."

The prospectus, one imagines, was more lurid than the performance, or the whole Castle Garden must inevitably have been destroyed. Everyone went home convinced of the truth of Mr. Payne's popular lyric.

4

Reference has been made to the age as one of prodigies. It was, certainly, to an astonishing degree one of infant wonders.

There were, for instance, "Master Hughes and his infant brothers," one violinist, four harpists, and a diminutive gentleman in short pants who played the accordeon. Master Hughes was advertised as "the Welsh Paginini," and people paid their good money

in 1840 to hear him perform in a series of quite well attended concerts. There is nothing more characteristic of the popular taste in recreation than the spectacle of this mature public, which repeatedly allowed the seed of serious musical endeavor to fall on stony ground, but rushed to listen to these depressing infants. The remark is not made in any spirit of disparagement of Master Hughes and his brothers, but as the result of an instinctive distrust of all such infantile phenomena. One would not have cared to see Adelina Patti when she came out with the famous doll.

At Master Hughes's début at the City Hotel a "numerous audience" was present in spite of the severe rain—

"which poured in almost overwhelming torrents on the devoted heads of the visiters. Each piece in succession astonished the visiters, loud and enthusiastic encores rewarded the efforts of the Juvenile Harpists. It would have been difficult to imagine the beauty of the compositions or the grace of the young performers. But when the 'infant violinist' made his debut a smile played upon the fair faces of the ladies, who had already become martyrs to the storm and their curiosity; but on the first note admiration succeeded wonder, and the applause gradually swelled in an uproar. One of his pieces, 'The Cuckoo Solo,' was performed no less than four times. Everyone parted in good humor and astonishment at the truly miraculous performances of the youthful minstrels, *malgre* the tempest that roared without."

And then, in 1849, there were the Bateman Sisters.

BROADWAY THEATRE

> Monday evening will be performed the prelude of The Man and the Tiger, to be followed by the Fifth Act of Richard III—Richard, Miss Ellen Bateman, Richmond, Miss Kate Bateman . . . to be followed by The Spoiled Child—Little Pickle, Miss Kate Bateman, Tag, Miss Ellen Bateman.

It sounds like a dull evening until one discovers that Miss Kate and Miss Ellen are—

"American prodigies, children of the ages of *six and four years,* who perform the most difficult Shakespearian characters with a perfect knowledge of the art, and a graceful and correct reading of the great author."

Their appearance was received as "a novel feature in the dramatic world." From the flattering manner in which "these Lilliputians have been spoken of by the unanimous press of the country" the critics were prepared to see something wonderful, and their expectations were fully realised. They were found to be "most intelligent children, giving evidence of a precocious talent far beyond the ages they are represented to be, acute in their perception and distinct in their articulation." They were loudly applauded

throughout the dialogue and called for at the end of the act.

They performed for six nights during which, aside from the comedy skits in which they also appeared, Miss Ellen, aged four, played scenes from the parts of *Richard III, Shylock* and *Lady Macbeth,* while Miss Kate, aged six, assumed the corresponding rôles of *Richmond, Portia* and *Macbeth.* Throughout their engagement they "excited the astonishment of the audience by their extraordinary performances and nightly elicited the most rapturous enthusiasm." There was, however, an impression prevalent that these tender infants were perhaps at their best in comedy. And one critic finally came out and remarked that—

"while we admire the genius of the children in their dramatic representations we cannot but feel a certain degree of astonishment that infants can so enter into the spirit of such appalling deeds as those committed by *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth.*"

From that point of view the whole business is somewhat revolting, and prodigiously pathetic. One imagines them playing "Banquo" with their dolls. . . .

5

The period was so engrossed in natural wonders, so eager for prodigies of all kinds, so responsive to the extraordinary and the outlandish, so consumed with credulous curiosity, that if it were necessary to

select among its exponents the most typical figure of the age one would be tempted to name Mr. Barnum who, more than any other personage of his day, understood these national characteristics and made haste to exploit them.

Phineas Taylor Barnum was born on July 5, 1810. In 1854, in his autobiography, he referred to his career as a checkered one. "I have been a farmer's boy and a merchant, a clerk and a manager, a showman and a bank president. . . . On the whole my life has been a merry one." He took pride in being known as the Prince of Humbugs, and believed that "to be a humbug means hitting the public in reality. Anybody who can do so is sure to be called a humbug by somebody who cannot."

In April, 1841, Mr. Barnum contracted for five hundred copies of *Sears's Pictorial Illustrations of the Bible,* and opened an office in New York. He sold thousands of copies of this work and was swindled out of his profits by unscrupulous agents. A little later, in June, he leased Vauxhall Garden, placing it under the management of Mr. John Hallett in order not to "compromise his dignity as a Bible man" through being known as the lessee of a theatre. The season brought him two hundred dollars. At the same time he was writing notices of the Bowery Amphitheatre for the newspapers and gratefully pocketing four dollars a week. Being practically penniless and with a family to support, he was negotiating cheerfully for the purchase, on a credit

basis, of Scudder's American Museum valued at some twelve thousand dollars, when, in the fall of 1841, it was sold over his head to the directors of Peale's Museum.

These "directors" were nothing but a company of speculators, headed by "a broken down bank president," who proposed to sell stock in the new venture. They had put up one thousand dollars in cash and were to make final payment on December 26 or forfeit their contract. Mr. Barnum went to the administrator of the Scudder estate and made arrangements to purchase the museum on the original plan if, on the proper date, the Peale directors should be unable to meet their obligation. He then began to flood the newspapers with squibs ridiculing the directors and warning the public to have nothing to do with the affair. It became evident that the stock was not selling so very well. Early in December the directors sent for Mr. Barnum and offered to employ him as manager of their joint museums, with a salary of three thousand dollars a year to begin on January 1, on condition that he put an end to his newspaper campaign. Mr. Barnum, who had no illusions concerning the sincerity of their offer, accepted.

"I ever try to serve the interests of my employers," he told them—with his tongue in his cheek.

The directors, having silenced Mr. Barnum, and confident that the estate would be only too glad to extend their time, made no effort to pay the sums due on December 26, for the good reason that most

of the stock was still to be sold. At two o'clock on the afternoon of December 27, therefore, Mr. Barnum was put in formal possession of the American Museum. He immediately sent the following note to the Peale directors, which must have annoyed them considerably—

"Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to inform you that you are placed upon the free list of the American Museum until further notice. P. T. Barnum, proprietor."

In the fall of 1842 he bought the collection of the Peale Museum, and later, in 1848, he also acquired that of the Chinese Museum. At his new establishment he began at once exhibiting—

"industrious fleas, educated dogs, jugglers, automatons, ventriloquists, living statuary, tableaux, gipsies, albinoes, fat boys, giants, dwarfs, rope dancers, caricatures of phrenology, 'live Yankees,' pantomimes, music, singing and dancing, dioramas, panoramas, models of Dublin, Paris, Niagara, Jerusalem, mechanical figures, fancy glass blowing, knitting machines and other triumphs of the mechanical art, dissolving views, and American Indians."

That was what the public wanted. The Magnificent Moving Diorama of the Funeral of Napoleon Bonaparte; an ANATOMICAL VENUS, to be seen at one shilling extra; Mrs. Pelby's magnificent, instructive and interesting WAX SCRIPTURE

STATUARY, representing in various groups and figures, all FULL SIZE OF LIFE, The Birth of Christ, His Trial, His Last Supper—and a group representing an INTEMPERATE FAMILY, all of which are to be seen at all hours; Santa Anna's Wooden Leg, taken by the American Army in Mexico—

RAYTHER PARTICULAR TALL

Two persons sixteen feet high weighing 845 pounds.

THE QUAKER GIANT AND GIANTESS

The tallest and decidedly the LARGEST PAIR OF HUMAN BEINGS the world ever produced!

Miss Elizabeth Simpson, a delicate young Quakeress of 21 years IS NEARLY EIGHT FEET HIGH and weighs 337 pounds!

Mr. Barnum pledges himself to pay
ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS
to any person who can produce a female of her height and size within one year from this time.

Also

THE HIGHLAND MAMMOTH BROTHERS

the fattest pair this side of Greece!

Mr. Barnum began to make money. . . .

6

Mr. Barnum soon discovered that the public likewise enjoyed being diddled into coming to see "extra exhibitions," and set about to gratify this taste. But, he points out,

"if I have exhibited a questionable dead mermaid in my museum it should not be overlooked that I have also exhibited cameleopards, a rhinoceros, grisly bears, orang-outangs, and great serpents, about which there could be no mistake because they were alive. . . ."

As for instance—

AN ENORMOUS BOA CONSTRICTOR
the largest serpent ever captured alive being
THIRTY FEET LONG
and measuring twenty inches in circumference.
Just previous to its arrival it deposited
SIXTY EGGS WEIGHING ONE POUND EACH
during one night, one of which, on being broken,
was found to contain a
JUVENILE SARPINT
about three feet long, which ran about
the cage with great rapidity. The remainder
of the eggs were saved and
WILL BE EXHIBITED WITH THE SNAKE!

One of the first of these "extra exhibitions" was THE GREAT MODEL OF NIAGARA FALLS WITH REAL WATER! Mr. Barnum advertised it with tremendous trumpetings. Actually the falls were eighteen inches high, and a single barrel of water answered the purpose for the entire season since "the falls flowed into a reservoir behind the scenes and the water was continually resupplied to the cataract by means of a small pump." Mr. Barnum admits that it was all "rather small potatoes."

The "Fejee Mermaid," in 1842, was one of the great hoaxes. She was brought to Mr. Barnum from Boston, and had been purchased many years before from a Japanese sailor who must have had a great deal of time on his hands. This gruesome object was made from parts of a monkey and a fish,

"so nicely conjoined that no human eye could detect the point where the junction was formed. . . . The animal was an ugly, dried up, black looking, and diminutive specimen, about three feet long. Its mouth was open, its tail turned over, and its arms thrown up, giving it the appearance of having died in great agony."

Solemn interviews were given out to the press. Highly picturesque and deceptive woodcuts appeared in the newspapers. Mr. Barnum issued ten thousand "mermaid pamphlets" which were sold at a penny each in all the principal stores and hotels. When everyone in town was talking about the mermaid she

was finally advertised for exhibition for one week only at Concert Hall, "more for the gratification of the public than for gain," along with the Ornithorhincus from New Holland, the connecting link between the seal and the duck—the Paddle Tail Snake from South America—the Siren, or Mud Iguana, an intermediate animal between the reptile and the fish—the Proteus Sanguihus, a subterraneous animal from a grotto in Australia—and "other animals forming connecting links in the great chain of Animated Nature."

A great chain of animated simpletons went to Concert Hall to view the marvel, whence she was removed to the American Museum, through the portals of which, during the first four weeks of her exhibition, some thirteen thousand persons precipitated themselves at twenty-five cents a head. . . .

General Tom Thumb, another of Mr. Barnum's most successful and lucrative exhibits, was not a hoax, but in his case, also, genial deception was practiced. The General was advertised as an English child, eleven years of age. He was actually five, and a native of Bridgeport, Connecticut. "But," says Mr. Barnum,

"had I announced him as only five years of age it would have been impossible to excite the interest or awaken the curiosity of the public. . . . I had observed the American fancy for European exotics, and if the deception . . . has done anything towards checking our disgraceful preference for foreigners I

may readily be pardoned for the offence I here acknowledge."

In 1847, after his return from the European tour during which he sang *Yankee Doodle* to Queen Victoria, the dwarf was announced as—

"the smallest Man in Miniature in the known world, weighing only fifteen pounds, who has been patronised by all the crowned heads of Europe, and has been seen by over 5,000,000 persons. He will be seen on the platform in one of the main halls of the museum in his extraordinary and popular performances, including his Citizen's Dress, in which he will relate his history, travels, sing a variety of songs, dance the polka and sailor's hornpipe, give representations of Napoleon, Frederick the Great and Grecian Statues. He will also appear in his magnificent Court Dress presented to him by Queen Victoria, and worn before all the principal courts of Europe. After which he will appear in his Beautiful Scotch Costume in which he will dance the Highland Fling. The magnificent presents received from Queen Victoria and the principal Crowned Heads of Europe will be exhibited."

The child, it seems, enjoyed it all. . . .

7

CHRISTY'S

far famed and original band of

ETHIOPIAN MINSTRELS

whose unique and chaste performances have been patronised by the elite and fashion in

all the principal cities of the Union—respectfully announce that they will give a series of their popular and inimitable concerts, introducing a variety of entirely new songs, choruses and burlesques.

Admission, 25c.

That was in 1847, at Mechanics' Hall, on Broadway. They planned to stay a few weeks, they remained there nine years and eleven months.

Of all the varieties of amusement indulged in during the Forties, the Negro Minstrels were perhaps the most popular, and in many ways the most significant, since they were an immediate product of the period, and represent the first manifestation of an essentially national type of entertainment, derived from purely native sources. Nothing more genuinely American can be found in the whole decade than these shows in which, for the first time, histrionic use was made of the songs, oddities of speech and characteristics of a class of inhabitants contributing a conspicuous, and peculiarly local, element to the American community. In the Minstrel Shows of the Forties may be seen the first attempt—unfortunately in the guise of comedy, and almost always in spurious form—to introduce to the wider public of America that neglected treasury of negro melodies which only very recently has begun to assume its due place in the folk music of the nation. The "plantation melodies" of that day were, many of them, written by Mr.

Foster and imported subsequently into the plantations of the South, but they do indicate a recognition of the existence of negro music and pay it the compliment of assiduous imitation. More and more, in the Forties, the negro was becoming an object of general contemplation. . . .

As early as 1842 "Dan" Emmett was presenting "Ethiopian" entertainments. He was followed, in 1843, by Buckley's New Orleans Serenaders who travelled all over the country with great success. In that same year another troupe, called the Virginia Minstrels, was organised in Buffalo by E. P. Christy. He had with him, as particular stars, "Billy" Birch and George Christy—whose real name was Harrington—who did the "bones," and Earl H. Pierce at the tambourine. It was not until 1846 that the name was changed to Christy's Minstrels, and the first performance given in New York, at Palmo's Opera House. New York already had its "Charlie White's Serenaders," at White's Melodeon, where they sang *The Dinner Horn,* and *I Must Go to Richmond,* and *I'm Sitting on the Rail, Dinah,* but in 1847 the Christy Company returned for its long sojourn at Mechanics' Hall.

"Now darkies sing and play and make a little fun,
We'll dance upon the green and beat the Congo drum,
We're a happy set of darkies, and we're assembled here to play,
So strike the bones and tambourine, and drive dull care away."

FIREMAN'S SONG

From a lithograph by T. Moore

The minstrel show was all the rage, and new "melodies" appeared as rapidly as they could be printed, to be tried on every domestic pianoforte. One may, of course, only mention a few of these favorites, and venture to quote some of the more characteristic stanzas. *Dearest May, The Dandy Broadway Swell, The Mellow Horn,* and *Campdown Races*—

"See dem flying on a ten mile heat—
Doo-dah, doo-dah!
Round de race track, den repeat—
Oh doo-dah-day!
I win my money on de bob-tail nag,
I keep my money in an old tow bag,
Oh doo-dah-day!
Gwine to run all night,
Gwine to run all day,
I'll bet my money on de bob-tail nag,
Somebody bet on de bay!"

Way down in Cairo, Julius from Kentucky, The Virginia Rose Bud, I'm off for Charleston—

"My massa and my missus, dey both am gone away,
Dey gone to de Sulpher Springs de summer months to stay;
And while dey're off togeder, on dis little kind of spree,
I'll go down to Charleston, de pretty gals to see. . . .
Charleston is a pretty place, de gals dey kiss so sweet,
Dey am so slender 'bout de waist, and dress so very neat;
But I'd rather kiss my Nell, dan all de gals I ever see,
Because her breath is like an orange blossom hanging on a tree. . . ."

The Baltimore Belle, Melinda May—"Laugh in de sunshine, weep in de rain, and walk where de lily bud bloom; down in de meadow, over de lane, oh come, my Melinda love, come"—*Nelly Bly, Bowery Gals*—"And her heel covered up the whole sidewalk as she stood right by me"—*Angelina Baker, Dolcy Jones, Mary Blane,* and *The Railroad Trabbler*—

"Oh, de steamboat—
Oh, de steamboat makes a mighty splutter,
And when de boiler bursts it lands in de water;
Oh, de telimagraph—
Oh, de telimagraph's good for to transport de lightning,
Or to get de news from Mexico when de Yankees is a fighting;
Oh, de bullgemirim—
De bullgine go so fast dey trabble out of sight,
And de only way you get to eat is to stop and take a bite;
Railroad trabble's getting all de go,
'Cause de hoss boat and steam boat goes so awful slow. . . ."

And, of course, *Stop dat knocking*—

"I once did love a yaller gal, whose name was Susy Brown,
She came from Alabama and was the fairest in the town.
Her eyes so bright that they shine at night,
When the moon has gone away. . . .
She was the handsomest gal that ever I did see,
She never went out walking with any colored man but me;
I took my banjo to the house to play three times or more,
When I heard two or three knocks pretty hard come bang against the door,

With a who dat, who dat, who dat, who dat knocking at the door?
Am dat you, Sam? Am dat you, Sam?
Why, Sam, ain't you gwine to luff me in?
No, you'd better stop dat knocking at the door—
Let me in—
Stop dat knocking—let me in—
Stop dat knocking—let me in—
Oh, you'd better stop dat knocking at my door. . . ."

One can imagine the entire troupe lined up, with the tambourines, the banjos and the bones going full blast behind the soloist in his big white collar, while the end men shout the spoken refrain back and forth, "Stop dat knocking—let me in—stop dat knocking—let me in," until everything comes to an end with a tremendous *plunk,* plunk-a-plunk-plunk, plunk-*plunk* on the last line. . . .

Curiously enough, much less can be said for the humor displayed in these extravaganzas. Jokes of the "When are soldiers not soldiers, when they are mustered" variety abounded, and dialogues which, while they may have gained something from gesture, and intonation, and outlandishness of costume, leave one with a certain sense of futility. For instance——

"Pompey, I heard you had a blow the other day. Was you taken up?"

"Yes, Julius, I had. I was tookened to the high court and stood trial. It was a troublesome fix."

"I suppose so. The fix you took the trouble to

get into. It looked as though you were beside yourself."

"Beside myself, why, I thought I took it very cool."

"Yes, cool for a coal stealer."

"But the judge was on my side."

"Oh, did he have big eyes and long ears?"

"Yes, his ears were peculiar."

"To my oracular vision, in common parlance, I should be inclined to say he was a donkey. And you stood beside that donkey?"

"Well, and what if I did?"

"Well, Pompey, as you stood beside that donkey you looked as if you were beside yourself!"

One prefers the choruses. . . .

8

They carried them home with them, the minstrel audiences, and sang them again, for it was a glee, madrigal and ballad singing age, in which associations of young ladies and gentlemen met on stated evenings around the pianoforte with their Social Song Books and pursued one another vocally through the intricate repetitions of such favorites as *A boat, a boat, to cross the Ferry, Go to Jane Glover and tell her I love Her,* and—

"Virtue, my Emma, is a gem,
The mind's pellucid diadem,
To fellow mortals kindly given,
A foretaste of a type of Heaven;

Pure and white as mountain snow
That hurries to the vale below,
Yet genial as the glorious sun
Which makes it unpolluted run—
Which makes it—
Makes it—
Makes it unpolluted run—
Which makes it unpolluted run."

If the singers knew their parts it all came out even on the last line, otherwise there was much laughter, presumably, and one began again—now, one, two, three, Virtue, my Emma. . . .

And when they had gone through the book there were the scores of *Maritana,* and *The Bayadere, or the maid of Cashmere,* and *The Daughter of the Regiment,* and *The Bohemian Girl*—

"When other lips and other hearts their tales of love shall tell,
In language whose excess imparts the power they feel so well,
There may perhaps in such a scene some recollection be
Of days that have as happy been, and you'll remember me. . . ."

Or perhaps they would all fall to singing the Grenadiers' Chorus from *The Maid of Saxony*—

"All hail the king, long live the king,
Our hope in peace and war,
With his renown let Prussia ring,
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

He is the pillar of the State,
Our sword and buckler he;
Heaven give to Frederick the Great
Eternal victory!"

In which case the two daughters of the house would be obliged to give the duet from the second act—"The cavaliers of Italy, the gay gallants of France, with Spain's and England's chivalry will join the mazy dance"—while some gentleman in the assembly consented, perhaps without too much entreaty, to render the Count's song—

"Love can ne'er be forced to tarry,
Chain him, he'll the bonds remove;
Paired, not matched, too many marry,
All should wed alone for love.
Let him on the bridal even
Trim his lamp with constant ray,
And the flame will light to Heaven
When the world shall fade away. . . ."

After which, of course, a lady would be prevailed upon to sing Sophia's "bravura" in the dungeon tower—

"Alas, what pangs must guilt conceal
When innocence like mine can feel
So crushed in such an hour.
I know not whether love be crime,
But if it is, in every clime,
'Tis woman's fatal dower."

And then perhaps the gentleman would see the lady home, in one of the Kipp and Brown stages. . . .

9

When it came to bound volumes of ballads—and almost everyone kept an album, as much for the sake of the engravings which frequently embellished the covers of the songs as the contents—they were so fortunate in that era as to have singing in their midst, from day to day, one of America's greatest song writers, and to be the first to hear melodies which have since become a valued part of the national chattels as they came fresh from his pen. Mr. Stephen C. Foster had not yet written *Old Black Joe* and *Suwanee River, My Old Kentucky Home* and *Old Dog Tray,* but he had already given them *Open thy lattice, Love* and *Nelly was a Lady, The Louisiana Belle, Oh Susanna* and *Uncle Ned*—"His fingers were long like the cane in the brake, he had no eyes for to see, he had no teeth for to eat the corn cake, so he had to let the corn cake be"—songs which circled the world and to which he was constantly adding the negro ditties which he did so much to popularise. The words were extremely simple, the tunes were the unforgettable harmonies from which folk music is produced.

But the albums consisted by no means of Mr. Foster's compositions alone. There was, for instance, *The Indian's Complaint*—

"Oh, why does the white man follow my path
Like the hound on the tiger's track?
Does the flush on my dark cheek waken his wrath,
Does he covet the bow on my back?
He has rivers and seas where the billows and breeze
Bear riches for him alone;
And the sons of the wood never plunge in the flood
Which the white man calls his own. . . .
Then go back from the red man's track,
For the hunter's eyes grow dim,
To find that the white man wrongs the one
Who never did harm to him. . . ."

They sang that, in the Forties, with enormous unction, while they drove the sons of the wood systematically further and further inland.

And there were *Ben Bolt* and *Jeannette and Jeannot;* the whole category of Scotch, Irish and English ballads; *Norah McShane* and *Jennie*—"I've wealth and I've rank, I have parks and I've hounds, I've lawns and I've deer, I have mansion and grounds, but all these without her, what are they to me?"—and they really meant it, as long as they were not called upon to put it into practice. There were *Years have rolled since we did part,* and *I sigh for the hours that once were mine,* and *Come rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer.* There was *The Old Sexton*—"mankind are my subjects, all, all, all, let them loiter in pleasure or toilfully spin, I gather them in, I gather them in!"—for they did so love to give themselves the shivers with such funereal subjects, the better to enjoy the luxury of living. There were nautical songs, since

those who had never been to sea must at least sing about it in that seafaring age—*The Midshipman's Farewell, Peaceful Slumbering on the Ocean* and *The Pilot,* in which one's sympathies are all, somehow, with the sailor—

> "Oh, Pilot, 'tis a fearful night,
> There's danger in the deep,
> I'll come and pace the deck with thee,
> I do not dare to sleep—
> Go down, the sailor cried, go down,
> This is no place for thee,
> Fear not, but trust in Providence,
> Wherever thou may'st be!"

There were *Home, Sweet Home, There's no spot of earth more dear* and *Oh, home of my boyhood*—"my own rural home, I'll love it the better wherever I roam; the lure of proud cities, the wealth of the main, have never a charm like my own native plain"—which the dwellers in the metropolis sang with infinite gusto in the parlors of their "magnificent abodes of opulence and luxury," for had not Mr. Rousseau taught them that Nature was indeed wonderful, especially when viewed from a sentimental distance!

And then there were love songs, gloomy love songs, tearful love songs, unrequited love songs, peevish love songs, wonderfully self-pitying, luxuriously depressing, delightfully sad love songs with tombstones and weeping willows on the covers—little loose strings from Mr. Byron's lyre. *I love her, how*

I love her; He said he came to find me, do you really think he did, written, presumably in a moment of absentmindedness, by Mr. Longfellow; *I'll shed no tears though thou art false*—"we may not meet again on earth, but we shall meet in Heaven"—a threat, apparently, not a promise; *I was not to blame, Mother*—

> "Oft hast thou told me, Mother dear,
> Subtle man I'd cause to fear—
> Thou a saint in yonder skies,
> Still thy warning voice I prize;
> But if he would still pursue,
> Mother dear, what could I do?
> Let this little tear proclaim,
> Mother, I was not to blame. . . ."

10

It has been said that the characteristics of a people are revealed in their songs. If such is the case, an examination of the sentimental, romantic, and frequently lugubrious songs of the Forties—leaving aside those compositions concerned with the charms of the humble cottage and the delights of nature, in which, possibly, they were doing a good deal of protesting—indicates that the American people of that period, those at least who had the time and the inclination to sing, were extremely satisfied with life as they found it. Sentimentality is primarily, perhaps, an outlet for superabundant contentment, and a romantic disposition the prerogative of dwellers in

security and uneventful ease. Life was so pleasant and well ordered, so placid and comfortable, that they were quite willing to warble delicately of death and misfortune, shipwreck, storm and disaster, confident that such catastrophes could only seldom touch them, in order to use them as a dark background upon which to contemplate the bright picture of their own well-being.

Unless, by chance, they were merely extremely bored. . . .

As for the love songs, one might be tempted to suppose that a large percentage of marriages in the Forties were unhappy, and the result of enforced parental interference—but there again, no doubt, the romantic disposition was having its little adventures, and the placid stream of domestic bliss was tumbling sentimentally over imaginary rapids.

One hopes so, for there are entirely too many songs on the order of *I have found thee,* if one should begin to take them seriously—

"Had I met thee in thy beauty,
Ere my heart and hand were free,
When no other claimed the duty
That my soul would yield to thee;
Had I wooed thee, had I won thee,
Oh, how blessed had been my fate;
But thy sweetness hath undone me,
I have found thee, but too late.

For to one my vows were plighted
With a faltering lip and pale;

Hands our cruel sires united,
Hearts were deemed of slight avail;
Thus my youth's bright morn o'er-clouded,
Thus betrothed to wealth and state;
All love's own sweet prospect shrouded,
I have found thee, but too late. . . ."

CHAPTER IX

YOUNG MEN ABOUT TOWN

1

THEY gave tremendous parties in the Forties, at which, apparently, the thing to do was to install a quantity of enormous mirrors, touch off several thousand candles, provide a sufficiency of potted plants, gilded settees, and wines at ten dollars a bottle, cover oneself with pink satin and diamonds, and gyrate with great dignity for several hours in a brilliant pother of grandiloquent banality.

In vain the present age may strive to fill its social calendar with pagan routs and Oriental fêtes, adorn its festive halls with live canaries, and distribute golden trinkets to its guests—it can never hope to equal the chaste magnificence, the virtuous splendor, the refined solemnity, the majestic elegance of those earlier functions. Nor can it ever aspire to have its entertainments so meticulously, so rapturously, and so platitudinously reported in the public prints.

It is not so much the events themselves—a formal supper, a ball, a soirée, with a little decorous dancing of forgotten measures, some stately conversation, a considerable consumption of oyster stew, and boned turkey, and cranberries in crystal bowls, and, very probably, a great deal of delicate laughter, all in the shimmering clarity of a hundred chandeliers—as the manner of their journalistic appraisal which fills one with wonder, and with a certain regret, for so much vanished simplicity of appreciation—so much satisfaction derived from such unremarkable marvels, so much conceit expended upon such normal virtues, so much pride taken in such trivial triumphs—and betrays the whole mentality of that perpetually amazed, shamelessly unreticent, innocently mercenary, hopelessly respectable period.

Unless, indeed, one should suddenly discover it to have been merely one of helpless inanity, pathetic ostentation, and paralysing dullness. The age of magnificent bathos . . .

One stumbles, for instance, with delighted incredulity, upon the reported account of Miss C's splendid soirée, at 473 Broadway, when "her father's elegant granite mansion was thrown open, in various ways," to a large company of his friends and acquaintances from different sections of the city—"yea, even from the surrounding country towns in Long Island and West Chester, to say nothing of New Jersey and Hoboken." From nine o'clock until ten the carriages rolled up rapidly to the door, while in the lower drawing rooms—

"Mr. C's excellent lady—attended by her accomplished daughter, arrayed in a splendid white satin dress and holding in her hands a couple of beautiful bouquets—received the company which soon increased to several hundreds of the very elite of society."

And in case the fact should be overlooked in the presence of so many guests from surrounding country towns, one is gravely informed that "the circle of society of which Mr. C forms the centre is scientific, elegant, highly respectable, and probably one of the richest and purest in town."

The entire soul and substance of the Forties lies embalmed, sanctimoniously aromatic, in that chastely idiotic sentence. The choice of attributes, the very sequence in which they are set forth, are a priceless and complete revelation of the spirit of that fatuously complacent, incorrigibly worldly community. A little culture, endowed with elegance, tempered by respectability, adorned with riches, and sanctified by purity. These five, and the greatest of them was—but let the period speak for itself—

"Probably at no recent soirée have so many fine fortunes and pretty women been present. At a fair valuation about $4,500,000 of property in stocks and real estate at present prices were represented by the fair ones present."

For, among others, were not the three splendid Miss Ls from Long Island on view? Charlotte, Martha of the "splendid ringlets," and Rebecca, "a

most neat looking young woman with her hair *en classique.*" Highly intellectual young ladies—none but men of talents could talk five minutes without feeling very small with Rebecca, who was there with her hair *en classique*—but modernized and accomplished. *Large fortunes, too, equal to $100,000 apiece!* And young Henry H who figured so largely —nearly three times more largely than the three splendid Miss Ls from Long Island—for was he not "twenty-eight years old only, and worth $800,000!" While one may be permitted occasionally to take for granted the elegance, and respectability, and purity of Mr. C's circle of society, never for a moment is one in danger of forgetting its material supremacy. One turns away from the account with the impression of having assisted at a public sale.

As for the soirée, it continued merrily from eight o'clock until two, the dancers occupying the two large apartments on the second floor while the promenaders and talkers filled the lower rooms. At ten o'clock the library and one other chamber were opened as banqueting rooms, one for the ladies and one for the gentlemen, and they remained so, filled, needless to say, with choice wines and delicate viands, until the last carriage had rolled away. Everyone went to get refreshments at convenience, the gentlemen attending the ladies, and there was no squeeze, no crowd, and no hurry. A novel idea, it seems, for which the credit must go to the charming Miss C herself, who never shone so brilliantly as she did on that evening. One sees her standing in the doorway

under a crystal chandelier, receiving the plaudits of her guests for her invention of the buffet supper, in her white satin dress covered with lace, her auburn hair brilliantly decorated with portions of the family jewelry, a personification of richly respectable purity, wondering what to do with those two bouquets in their sticky paper frills.

One is also permitted to see Mrs. Maria P, of Greenwich Street, interesting relict of Mr. P, as she passes through the banqueting room,

"tall, graceful, beautiful, clear complexion, dark hair, dark blue eyes, arrayed in half mourning, white satin under dress, muslin tunic, black velvet bodice, band of pearls around her head—*very neat, not gaudy, chastely correct.* . . ."

2

There comes, in another New York season, a sound of violins playing Prince Albert waltzes and Amelie quadrilles, a popping of champagne corks, a "roll of private equipages made distinct to the ears of the families residing in the neighborhood," which, "towards the hour when the sad and sober are retiring for rest," draws one to the elegant mansion on Howard Street where Madame F is giving that grand fancy dress ball which passed into history as "one of the most superb and select soirées of the winter." The night, one is told, was intensely cold, but this was no obstacle to—

"the gay company that had the honor of an invitation to this *recherché* quadrille, and there perhaps was

never a more brilliant and fashionable assemblage drawn together in the city."

The characters were all in good taste and discretion—in fact, it appears that a certain Desdemona in the company seemed to need the aid of a Moor, "but as Ethiopian characters are now considered *outré,* no one was so gross as to appear in such garb and visage," so that the sensibilities of the age which was destined shortly to contribute black face minstrels to the national gaiety were not offended on this occasion; "the utmost harmony and delight" prevailed throughout the evening—exemplified, no doubt, by that Miss Virginia W, of Carroll Place, who,

"admired of all, created quite a sensation in the room, her company being a treat, so intelligent and bright, and distinguished by so clear a conception of the talents of those she selected as companions for her rational enjoyment,"

a characterisation which leaves one slightly chilled, somehow; and, lastly, the dresses were of the richest materials—let there be no hesitation in the mind on that point.

Respectability, elegance, purity—never, in that day, did they cease protesting.

And then Miss H, of Albion Place, was there, a magnificently pathetic figure, "moving majestically through the drawing rooms, having retired from the ball room." No, she was not a wall flower, her presence on the contrary was much in request, but since

she was another's, "all her time was employed in listening to the pretty sentiments of her adorer!" How chastely correct, but how monotonous for Miss H, unless her adorer was possessed of unusual powers of originality. It was not as though they were permitted to sit in some secluded and uninterrupted corner, and talk to each other like human beings. They were obliged to move majestically through the drawing rooms, like two goldfish in a bowl. And with Miss H, of Albion Place, a whole generation, surely, comes to life and moves majestically across the page in all the splendor of its suffocating decorum, its impeccable deportment, its ponderous domesticity.

And one word more, which sums it all up—"there were no parvenus there, all were of the oldest families in the city. . . ."

3

The subject was become of enormous importance in that season of 1841. The town was, it appears, filled with parvenus and pretenders to fashion, low persons who had sprung up within the century, and who persisted in thrusting their unwelcome presence upon the *beau monde,* not to mention the *bon ton,* of New York Society, so that finally it had become imperative to set in motion a new movement in fashionable life, and, in fact, a "reorganization of the Old *Noblesse,*" no less.

One seems to hear the echo of many a smart tilbury and cabriolet clattering over the paving stones from one splendid mansion to another—from

Waverly Place to St. John's Park, from the Battery to East Broadway—conveying velvet cloaked ladies in feathered bonnets to feverish conclaves of highly elegant dudgeon; to see august assemblages of blue blooded dandies in tightly fitting checkered unmentionables, expectorating into the brass spittoons of the Astor House bar, and pounding their tasselled canes on the floor in gin flavored outbursts of virtuous and refined, though slightly befuddled, indignation.

The desired end was finally attained— one cannot help reproducing much of the actual mellifluous wording of the contemporary account—by one hundred and fifty young men about town—one had scarcely imagined the species to be so prolific—

"representing the choicest and best blood of the city, who, animated ostensibly by a desire to reciprocate the politeness of many of the ladies of the old *noblesse* of whose elegant hospitality they had partaken during the winter, determined to give a magnificent ball at the City Hotel."

They met in solemn council, these one hundred and fifty young men about town, representing the choicest and best blood of the city—and, in all likelihood, one of the largest collections of priceless young prigs ever assembled in one place—and, having subscribed each fifty dollars in a nonchalant manner, decided to extend invitations to all their female acquaintance, comprising, for their part, "all the youth, beauty, wealth and talent of the city." And then, in order to—

"give a peculiar kind of *éclat* to the whole concern, invitations were sent to all the surviving Knickerbockers who formed the fashionable society of the city at the beginning of the century."

How peculiar an *éclat,* no one today can begin to appreciate. One may be sure, however, that the Duchess of Broadway was very near the top of the list.

Having done which they probably retired to the chaste seclusion of the Union Club to exhibit their whiskers and expectorate, for a change, into the brass spittoons of that elegant institution, confident that the world was made safe for aristocracy. At all events they had successfully elbowed aside the parvenus and pretenders who were unable to go back farther than forty or fifty years without stumbling for an ancestor upon a butcher, or a tailor, or a cobbler, "or some other equally respectable mechanic."

As for the ball itself, it was, one learns, on the most splendid scale imaginable, and far surpassed anything of the kind that had taken place in New York since the Revolution. For three weeks prior to the event all of the female acquaintances of the one hundred and fifty young men about town had been busily preparing dresses, and decorations, and chandeliers—quantities of chandeliers—and mirrors, and tapestries, and ornaments of every description, with "truly brilliant" results. In fact,

"the blaze of lights was too brilliant for description, and their arrangement was the most splendid ever

seen, the chandeliers, girandoles, candelabras and vases being of the most magnificent character."

Indeed, this ball seems to have been the apotheosis of artificial illumination. Wherever one ventures one is met by the glare of a hundred lights, reflected by a thousand crystal pendants. In the ballroom, two thousand candles shone on the Duchess of Broadway's gold sprig velvet. In the suite of three rooms thrown open for supper, each of the thirty tables, furnished in the finest style, was provided with a magnificent light shedding vase to supplement the large and beautiful chandelier hanging above it. One almost expects to find a light in the centre of one's plate when one finally becomes sufficiently accustomed to the glitter to partake of the delicacies and rarities furnished by "the three States of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and a part of Great Britain and France," and to have one's glass turn into a candlestick when one attempts to sample those wines of the very first quality which made it possible for "this part of the ceremony to correspond with the elegant *tout ensemble.*"

The dancing floor, one is told,

"was painted with calamine paint in a very picturesque manner, and enormous mirrors were placed all around the room. All the green and hot houses of Long Island, the adjoining counties, and even Philadelphia, were ransacked . . ." one has a vision of breathless young women making off with potted plants torn from the hands of defenceless horticul-

turalists ". . . were ransacked for choice plants bearing fruits and flowers to decorate the ball and supper rooms, imparting beauty and odor to the scene. Around these, beautiful lights"—

there is no escaping them—

"candelabras and girandoles were displayed with great skill, giving the entrance to the suite of supper rooms the appearance of the entrance to a fairy palace; and the illusion was rendered the more nearly perfect by a number of live singing birds in cages, placed in the trees in such a manner that the cages were not seen though the birds were . . ." an extremely fortunate arrangement for which someone, surely, deserves a tremendous amount of credit.

Aside from that the scene evoked puts one a little in mind of Nellie the Ragpicker's Daughter's idea of Heaven.

There were present, it seems, during the evening about eight hundred persons, including "many highly respectable gentlemen" from Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore who were given access to the ball through the courtesy of the one hundred and fifty young men about town, but of course amongst such a crowd—

"it was impossible to do justice to the beauty and talents of a tithe of the ladies, or, indeed, to remember more than a moiety of their names."

However, in addition to hundreds of other young ladies "who conspired to form a constellation of

beauty such as has never been surpassed, and made the place seem like enchantment," one did manage to notice the beautiful Miss H, "one of the fair daughters of a widow lady up town"; the Duchess of Broadway's lovely daughter who figured beside her mother in a white dress with her usual crown of roses à la Victoria; the Misses L, of Lafayette Place, the granddaughters of a millionaire—reference is perhaps intended to Charlotte, Martha and Rebecca, late of Long Island, at all events one of them had her head dressed with pink marabout feathers, a profusion of which went down the front of her gown, "giving her a sylph like air," the illusion is not so readily grasped, "but the solid charms of these ladies made them more valued than celestial beauties"; the two lovely daughters of Mr. W, the Wall Street financier of the Second Avenue, who "adorned the room by their presence, hanging carelessly on their father's arm"; and the usual argosies of beauty from Waverly Place.

And, in a special paragraph, "the intelligent consort," hallowed phrase,

"of a member of Congress, accompanied by her uncle, that prince of good fellows, Geoffrey Crayon, Gent, who, with his usual good taste stole away from his rustic retreat at Sleepy Hollow to be present at this scene of loveliness. . . ."

Thus the most brilliant affair of the century went glittering on its airy, fairy way from nine until four o'clock, under the patronage of the one hundred and

A FASHION PLATE OF THE PERIOD

From Godey's Lady's Book

fifty young men about town, representing the choicest and best blood of the city—so that one is astonished to learn suddenly at the end that—

"much of this brilliancy was owing to the borrowing and credit system. The lights were borrowed, the plants were borrowed, the birds were borrowed, *and some of the dresses and most of the jewels were borrowed.* There were present in jewels and dresses about $500,000, of which $300,000 probably were obtained by credit and borrowing. Thus the great credit system goes on. The States borrow, the banks borrow, the merchants borrow, and we see no earthly reason why the ladies should not borrow if they think proper."

Perhaps the real objection to the parvenus and pretenders was that they were not obliged to borrow . . .

4

One is not to suppose that the panegyric style of reporting social events was confined to the columns of the penny newspapers, for the greedy consumption of the credulous proletariat. That the general public should have fattened and grown sleek on this smugly bombastic stuff speaks volumes for the dismal snobbery of the national mind, and betrays the barbaric crudity of its conception of elegant manners and intelligent social intercourse. But that a personage of such unquestioned taste and refined respectability—the style is insidiously contagious—as Mr. Philip Hone, writing in his own personal diary for his own personal delectation, should have undertaken

the flights of superlative verbiage which he exhibits is sufficient indication that a similar extravagant indelicacy and unsophistication were prevalent and accepted in all classes of the community—to say nothing of the richest and purest circles of society.

Returning, for instance, from Mrs. Brevoort's fancy dress ball, that great affair which had occupied the minds of the people of all stations, ranks and employments—the words are Mr. Hone's—he remarks that the mansion of his entertainers was better calculated for such a display than any other in the city, and that everything which host and hostess could do in preparing and arranging, in receiving their guests, and making them "feel a full warrant and assurance of welcome was done to the topmost round of elegant hospitality." Never before had New York witnessed a fancy ball so splendidly gotten up, in better taste, or more successfully carried through, and the *coup d'œil* of which so dazzled the eyes and bewildered the imagination; and Mrs. Brevoort in particular, it seemed to him, "by her kind and courteous deportment, threw a charm over the splendid pageant which would have been incomplete without it." What surprises one is that Mr. Hone's account should have been incomplete without a reference to it, unless, possibly, Mrs. Brevoort's polite behavior was exceptional!

One has already seen, in another extract, his:

"magnificent abode of costly luxury," applied to Mr. Ray's residence, on that occasion when, "from a

scene of expensive hospitality," he was conveyed to "another more splendid and expensive entertainment where the sparkling of diamonds, the reflection of splendid mirrors, the lustre of silk and satins, and the rich gilding of tasteful furniture were flashed by the aid of innumerable lights upon the dazzled eyes of a thousand guests."

There is more restraint here, perhaps, than in the penny press, a more elegant rounding of periods, less blowing of bugles over the chandeliers and candelabras, less celebration of the normal attributes of polite society, but the same bland naïveté of spirit is evident, the same delight in purely sumptuary facts, the same emphasis laid on unquestioned virtues. All in a twitter of topheavy adjectives.

And under it all, under the elegantly rounded periods, under the glitter of the magnificent chandeliers shining on the richly gilded furniture, under the rigid veneer of all that pompous decorum—in the penny press and in the private diaries—one begins to see the gormandising and wine spilling of that fashionably bloated and intoxicated era; the imposture of its imported deportment, to match the hypocrisy of its borrowed extravagance; the ungraceful nudity of its raffish passion for splendor; the gleam of its indispensable brass spittoons, which all its resplendent cut glass and silver can never conceal. The monumental anticlimax of its refined vulgarity.

One sees it—and one can only smile at its artlessness, delight in its incongruities, envy it its exuber-

ance. A childish age, filled with fabulous marvels. . . .

But Mr. Hone has other observations to make in connection with society, which, from the point of view of present day conceptions of journalism, reveal an unexpected, however worthy and justified, attitude towards the press of the Forties, to say nothing of its own character. For it seems that Mrs. Brevoort's guests, on the occasion of her great fancy dress ball, expressed considerable surprise at finding in their midst an individual, costumed prudently enough as a knight in armor, who turned out to be a certain Mr. A, "reporter and editor of an infamous penny paper"—and Mr. Hone proceeds to name one which appears to this day on many a New York breakfast table. This surprise on the part of the guests arose primarily from the fact that never before in the history of New York society—the ball took place early in 1840—had a reporter been permitted to be actually present at any social function. It developed, however, that the principal editor of this infamous penny paper had called upon Mr. Brevoort to obtain permission for this "person" to be present on this occasion, in order to report in his paper an account of the ball. To this Mr. Brevoort, contrary to all precedent and, presumably, much against his will, had finally consented——

". . . as by doing so a sort of obligation was imposed on the reporter to refrain from abusing the house, the people of the house, and their guests, which would have been done in case of a denial. But this

is a hard alternative," Mr. Hone complains. "To submit to this kind of surveillance is getting to be intolerable, and nothing but the force of public opinion will correct the insolence—which, it is to be feared, will never be applied as long as gentlemen make this Mr. A hail fellow well met. . . . Whether the notice they took of him, and that which they extend to the principal editor when he shows his ugly face in Wall Street, may be considered approbatory of the daily slanders and unblushing impudence of the paper they conduct, the effect is equally mischievous. It affords them countenance and encouragement, and they find the more personalities they have in their paper the more papers they sell."

Even the most casual perusal of the "infamous penny paper" in question convinces one, certainly, that the spirit of contemporary journalism was not distinguished by any great degree of tactful delicacy; but Mr. Hone himself proves the pudding quite unconsciously by remarking on the following day that a long account of the ball was printed, but, as it was an implied condition of the reporter's admission that the account should be decent, it was, consequently, tame, flat and tasteless!

One understands more readily, however, after these illuminating comments, the elegant prospectus with which, on April 10, 1841, Mr. Greeley announced the appearance of the New York *Tribune,* price one cent.

"The Tribune," he insisted, "as its name imports, will labor to advance the interests of the People, and

to promote their Moral, Social and Political well-being. The unmoral and degrading Police Reports, Advertisements, and other matters which have been allowed to disgrace the columns of our leading Penny Papers will be carefully excluded from this one, and no exertion spared to render it worthy of the hearty approval of the virtuous and refined, and a welcome visitant at the family fireside."

5

In September, 1841, Ferdinand, Prince de Joinville, third son of Louis Philippe—by the grace of circumstances King of the French—was sent to America in command of the frigate *La Belle Poule,* or The Beautiful Chicken, on one of those international sight-seeing publicity tours which royal families so frequently impose on their long-suffering progeny. An added interest was imparted to this particular tour since it was the Prince de Joinville who, in the previous year and in the same frigate, had been entrusted with the mission of transporting to France, for belated burial in that city of Paris which he had loved so well, the remains of the prisoner of St. Helena. The prince's quarterdeck had borne the weight of that immortal sarcophagus, his own hands had touched the fringe of the Imperial shroud. At Longwood in the little chapel, when they opened the grave, he had stood face to face with Napoleon.

Aside from that, Ferdinand was only twenty-four, of an engaging exterior and possessed of charming manners, and the son of a King—a combination

which republican America has always found irresistible. To be sure, America has always been fortunate in her princely visitors. This one was received with such loud outcries and social genuflexions as might have been expected from the society of that era, which always rushed helter-skelter in its best gold sprig velvet to view any new marvel, whether it were a prince of the blood, or, as advertised in that same season, "a very elegant giraffe recently caught in a trap which will be exhibited next Sunday at his full length."

The prince, likewise, was exhibited at his full length in all the important cities of the Atlantic seaboard, and bandied about from one magnificent abode of costly luxury to another, in a series of brilliant, and, no doubt, extremely expensive, entertainments, culminating in Mrs. Mott's Magnificent Fête in New York.

"This splendid soirée, which had excited such a sensation in fashionable circles," was attended by three hundred guests—one fears that some of the one hundred and fifty young men about town were not invited—gathered together—

"in the superb suite of rooms in Dr. Mott's splendid mansion in Depeau Place, which was fitted up in a style of princely magnificence, and completely crowded with an array of fashion and loveliness such as had seldom been seen assembled on any occasion."

Indeed, one is soon made aware of the fact that a more brilliant, *recherché,* and magnificent entertain-

ment had never been given in the city of New York.

In proof of which one is vouchsafed a glimpse of the "elegant suite of seven magnificent rooms" on the second floor, their walls ornamented with a very valuable and choice collection of paintings, and "filled with many evidences of the most refined taste in the costly furniture and *bijouterie* scattered around"—a picture, no doubt erroneous, of Mrs. Mott passing through the rooms at the last minute flinging handsful of superfluous diamonds about, arises instinctively before the mind. One enters the dining room, to the right of the vestibule on the ground floor, and gazes curiously at the supper table "loaded with the choicest delicacies, ices, confectionaries, jellies, punches and wines of the most fastidious quality," around which, at three o'clock in the morning, "the prince and the gallant officers of his suite sat down to an elegant *soupé* in the company of their fair hostess and her family." One ascends the beautiful white marble staircase, tastefully decorated with a variety of choice greenhouse plants, to that principal *salon* where the fair hostess and Dr. Mott received the brilliant company in an "affable and courteous manner which was the theme of every tongue, and generally enhanced the enjoyment of the guests."

It would, indeed, have been too dreadful if Dr. Mott or the fair hostess had been feeling peevish that evening, and had made disagreeable remarks to their guests as they came trooping in! To hear them talk, in the Forties, one would imagine such a contingency

to have been quite within the bounds of possibility.

One pauses finally for a moment in the doorway to blink at Mrs. Mott in a splendid robe of Damascus manufacture, of ruby colored satin richly wrought in gold, a scarf of gold tissue from Constantinople about her classical shoulders, the *corsage* of her dress ornamented with diamonds to match a magnificent tiara of pure brilliants; to hold one's breath before Miss Mott,

"the cynosure of all eyes, her lovely arms burdened with bouquets of the most beautiful japonicas and rare exotics presented by her numerous admirers—seeming, in the full bloom of her youth and radiant charms, to be an impersonation of Flora—attired in a rose colored crape over the same colored satin trimmed with *rouleaux* of a similar material, with a *volant* of the most costly Brussels lace, full half a yard in depth, tastefully looped up with bouquets of the most delicate flowers."

And her snowy brow encircled by a wreath of roses —à la Victoria no doubt—of which the centre of each flower was a diamond.

And then one tiptoes away from "that brilliant and animated scene. . . ."

6

But only for a few hours, since one cannot leave the Prince de Joinville without looking in at the Astor House the next evening on the magnificent farewell dinner tendered to him by the Corporation of New York City, at which event, for a change,

one is given the opportunity of observing the municipality of the day in the discharge of its hospitable functions, and of realising, if necessary, that chandeliers and candelabras were by no means a prerogative of the idle aristocracy. "No one who was not present," one is assured, "can form the faintest idea of the magnificence of the scene," but as the carriages were rolling up, and while the three hundred guests were assembling—including Lord Morpeth, another itinerant nobleman—even the hat boys in the lobby of the Astor House, and very probably the bartenders of that popular resort, must have known that it was a—

"grand dinner, long to be remembered in the annals of the city, and beyond a doubt the most brilliant affair ever given in this or any other country on the same scale."

The aspect alone of the dining room, bedizened and bedaubed for the occasion, would have been sufficient to convince them of these statements, and out in the kitchens and pantries the same impression must have obtained. For any hat boy whose curiosity moved him to poke his head around the dining room door would have seen that "the most splendid room in the country" had been newly painted throughout, and embellished further with the coat of arms of each State, emblazoned above the blank spaces between the windows. He would have noticed, also, that the windows were all hung with rich red, white and blue draperies, while at each end of the room similar

hangings filled the recesses between the "splendid pillars." Having assimilated these wonders his attention would next have been drawn to the fact that at the east end of the room, immediately in front of the pillars, they had put in a raised platform for the German Band which was destined to "furnish delightful music" during the entire evening. He would then unquestionably have stood for a long time before this band stand and allowed his eye to be gladdened by the sight of a beautiful painting placed in front of it, representing the river as viewed from the Battery and showing the two visiting French frigates, *La Belle Poule* and *Le Cassard,* lying at anchor in the stream. And, being a boy of the Forties, he would have cocked his eye at the frigates and examined them expertly for any possible nautical errors on the part of the artist.

On the other hand it is quite conceivable that his attention might have remained riveted from the very first moment on the arrangement of the tables. In which case he would have seen that at the head of the centre table stood two large golden candelabras, each containing seven wax candles of red, blue and white, while down—or to be exact, "adown"—each wing of the table six other golden candelabras were disposed, each holding five tri-colored wax candles. Besides these, there were two "very large and splendid golden candelabras" placed on the floor—the municipality did nothing by halves—each ten feet high and holding fifteen wax candles apiece. In addition to which there were five "magnificent chan-

deliers, of the same pattern as those in the ballroom at Buckingham Palace,"—a delicate compliment to Lord Morpeth, no doubt—containing each thirty-five tri-colored wax lights. Which makes a grand total of five magnificent chandeliers, sixteen golden candelabras, and two hundred and seventy-nine tri-colored candles. The center table, moreover, was "profusely decorated and with the highest possible taste, containing every variety of fruit, fresh and preserved, that the earth affords"—one shudders at the thought of preserved figs as a possible feature of table decoration—

"while behind the Mayor's chair were placed two splendid golden temporary pillars, on which appeared glittering spears sustaining the stars and stripes and the tricolor. . . ."

Decidedly, there was nothing cheap about the Corporation of New York City in the Forties. One witnessed, it is true, at a recent municipal festival, an illuminated crystal pyramid, and an arrangement of golden tripods bearing receptacles in which, no doubt, the City Fathers were to place their discarded personalia—but golden pillars behind the Mayor's chair, and glittering spears, and golden candelabras ten feet high, these belong to a vanished grandeur. And it is doubtful whether any civic banquet of the present day would entail such gastronomic perseverance, such digestive prowess, as that earlier feast. One look at the bill of fare, or more properly the *menu* since it was all set forth in the most appetising cu-

linary French, and one reaches instinctively for one's bottle of Spolen's Elixir of Health.

Two kinds of soup, two kinds of fish, five kinds of *relevés,* starting the banquet off modestly with such preliminary delicacies as turkey *à la perigore garni* and calf's head *en tortue à la moderne.* Then a few "cold set pieces," such as *pain de volaille à la reine historiée sur un socle,* which would seem to have been a queen of stuffed fowl standing on a pedestal. After which more solid business, in the form of nineteen varieties of *entrées,* in the midst of which one perishes of indecision before such succulent possibilities as *turbans de filet de volaille à la babilonne, filets de faisans farcis à la d'Artois sauce perigueux, paté chaud d'ortolans desossés à la Montebello,* and *aspic de filet de bass aux truffes.* And then, when everyone has had a chance to get seated and leave a little room for the waiters, roast beef, roast lamb, roast duck, roast turkey, roast chicken and roast goose, followed by an assortment of whole guinea hens, quails and partridges with seven kinds of vegetables. And finally, to wind up, twelve different pastries and desserts, four kinds of cake, and nine varieties of sweet *entremets.* And at the very end, more to be admired than tasted, the "mounted pieces" —a Roman helmet on a pedestal, a vase of nougat decorated with meringues, a pastry harp, and an international trophy surmounted by the Goddess of Liberty.

One misses the blancmange heart pierced by a golden arrow of another banquet of the period. . . .

With the coffee and liqueurs, and toothpicks, came the toasts. Thirteen regular toasts, including "The King of the French, Washington and Lafayette"—"Peace, the greatest of blessings when maintained with honor, but a curse if secured by the sacrifice of national dignity or independence"—and "Woman, the mother of patriots, heroes and statesmen." And a large number of independent toasts, some of them in staggering poor taste, as, for instance, the following astonishing piece of national hysteria—

"The frigate *La Belle Poule,* the Pet Chicken of the French Navy. She has proved the coffin of a military hero, and may hereafter be the cradle of a naval one. We give her a hearty Godspeed; may she always be successful whenever her cause is just, but otherwise unsuccessful, but if ever she is opposed to an American ship may she be unsuccessful right or wrong. And I give you the United States; may she be always right, but always successful, right or wrong."

Prolonged applause. This sort of thing passed for very pretty wit in the Forties, and the good citizens of that era never hesitated to shout *Yankee Doodle* at the top of their lungs in every foreigner's ear. The world, moreover, must never be allowed to forget that England had twice inadvertently sat on an American tack. . . .

Everyone went home finally—the Goddess of Liberty surmounting the international trophy having by this time entirely melted away—and some un-

fortunate flunkey began blowing out the two hundred and seventy-nine tri-colored candles.

7

And the next morning, in their respective chambers, over their possibly somewhat bilious breakfasts, Lord Morpeth and the Prince de Joinville had the pleasure of perusing the following elegant editorial, in which the nasal voice of the great American People of that decade is heard, raised in a virtuously *sans culotte* tirade which one does not hesitate to exhibit, like the giraffe, at its full length, as a sample of contemporary journalism, a reflection of the manners of the time, and an invaluable interpretation of the popular attitude. There is in it, certainly, all that the period has to offer in the way of patriotic clatter-whacking. It exemplifies, also, to a fascinating degree, the national passion for minding other peoples' business. And as a literary composition alone it is not without a certain charm.

"Our princely and noble visiters"—one preserves the original spelling—"from Europe, Prince de Joinville and Lord Morpeth. The succession of novel and interesting events which have taken place in this republican metropolis, and in her sister Atlantic cities, in connection with the visit to this country of His Royal Highness the Prince de Joinville, and of the Right Honorable Viscount Morpeth" —the titles come ringing out in true republican fashion—"produces probably some of the most curious, characteristic, novel, and philosophical reflec-

tions that can fill the mind, or throw a gleam of light on the future history of the human race, in its progress towards political improvement and general liberty.

"His Royal Highness, the Prince, a son of His Majesty the King of thirty-five millions of French people, has been received with marked hospitality by the people and the public authorities of this country wherever he has gone. In New York, in Boston, and everywhere else, have these sentiments been expressed in the most splendid dinners, balls, parties, soirées, speeches and turnouts. Men, women and children—the old and young—the ugly old maids and the lovely young women—hoary headed politicians and moustached young blockheads, have all joined in these festivities, and given an *éclat* to the scenes that spoke well for the national courtesy of the occasion. All sorts of eloquence, good and bad—grammatical and ungrammatical—obscure as night and clear as the noonday sun, have been addressed to His Royal Highness, and all attached to his elegant and accomplished suite. He has been shown everything that was worth seeing—banks, penitentiaries, factories, lunatic asylums, public halls, and ships without end. He has been received and idolised, sometimes as the representative of the French people—sometimes as the son of his royal father—sometimes as an amiable and accomplished young man—and sometimes as a great royal and natural curiosity from foreign parts, cast by chance upon these shores.

"So also with the Right Honorable the Viscount Morpeth, the noble and lineal heir to all the best blood of the Howards, one of the oldest and one of the best shoots of the glorious but antique nobility of Imperial England. His Lordship has been dined and wined—taken here and taken there—to see sights and

hear sounds, all of which have been novel and some of them inexplicable even to a man of reflection, who visits for the first time this original and republican land.

"But we beg—we entreat—we ask both these distinguished visiters not to misunderstand the meaning and bearing of these remarkable attentions. The Motts, the Livingstons, the Smiths, the Thompsons, and the whole race of Jackstraw aristocracy of this wonderful land, may excel all their former efforts, and astonish the distinguished visiters themselves with a tolerable but tinsel imitation of royal and noble entertainments in Europe—but we tell them truly that the deep and settled sentiments of this country of seventeen millions, who double themselves every twenty-five years, have never been seen, or heard, or known, or exhibited on any of these gay occasions. All the dinners, fêtes, balls, soirées—all the courtesies of the passing hour, were nothing—tell nothing—exhibit nothing but the frivolities of human life, and an artificial state of society, of little influence and less power."

So much for those scientific, elegant, respectable, rich, and pure circles of society, those *recherché* assemblages of fashionable refinement.

"Let us explain ourselves by a single appeal to a plain and practical illustration.

"Suppose that tomorrow, or next day, one of Cunard's line of steamers were to bring us, through Boston, from London and Paris, the astounding intelligence of a revolution in France—of the establishment of a republican government in that sunny land—also the news of a revolution in England,

and the establishment of a similar government in our holy and delicious 'fatherland'; suppose such intelligence were to be issued this blessed and glorious day, what do you imagine would be the feeling—the sensation—the sympathy—the tremendous exultation of the whole mass of the free people in this country? Can any person realise the deep tide of sentiment and sympathy that would rise, mountain high, and overwhelm, in one eternal Niagara rush, all the balls, and dinners, and soirées—with the Smiths, and Thompsons, and Livingstons, and Jackstraws—that have been given both to His Royal Highness and the noble lord?

"We are delighted with the welcome which these distinguished visiters receive; but it is due to truth—to this country—to a free people—to all Europe, and the succeeding age, that these pretty things should be understood in their proper light. That is all."

At all of which Lord Morpeth and the Prince de Joinville probably exclaimed, each in his own dialect, "Fancy now!" As for all the Jackstraw aristocracy, Mr. Dickens was coming, and there were too many other things to think about, too many new chandeliers to prepare. The one hundred and fifty young men about town could not be bothered. . . .

CHAPTER X

CIVIC POMPS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

1

"The great Boz ball, the great Boz ball
Comes off on Monday night;
The high, the low, the short and tall,
Are eager with delight . . ."

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dickens arrived in New York in February, 1842, replete with New England dinners. For months in advance those unfortunates —if, indeed, there were any to be found—who had not already perused his works had been breathlessly correcting this neglect in order to be able to take part in any general conversation at all. For weeks elaborate preparations had been under way for the reception, in the metropolis, of "the literary guest of the nation." Gad's my eye! New York must not fall behind Boston in the impressiveness of its welcome to the visiting lion—that "small, bright eyed, intelligent looking young fellow," as Mr. Hone found him, "thirty years of age, somewhat of a dandy in his dress,

with 'rings and things and fine array,' brisk in his manner, and of a lively conversation," accompanied by "a little fat, English looking woman, of an agreeable countenance, and," Mr. Hone is inclined to think, "a 'nice' person."

So they gave him a dinner, presided over by Washington Irving, at the City Hotel, or, to be exact, "a festive entertainment in a style not surpassed by any ever partaken of in New York," at which some eight hundred citizens, "embracing much of the Intellect, Social Eminence, Literary Character, and Worth of the city," united in a tribute to "the distinguished Guest of the Country." This large and representative company assembled at about six o'clock, and—

"after an hour of social converse with their guest and with each other, sat down to four ranges of tables entirely filling the grand saloon of the hotel." Whereupon, "the blessing of Heaven having been invoked, two hours were then devoted to the discussion of the luxuries and delicacies bounteously provided by the hosts, at the conclusion of which the cloth was removed, and the intellectual banquet opened."

There followed *three hours* of speeches and toasts, during the course of which someone remarked that one of the causes of the popularity in America of the writings of English genius was the strong manly sense of John Bull "which lies beneath his ostentatiously displayed prejudices"—a delicately tactful observation under the circumstances—while another

gentleman arose to propose "The Pilgrims of Genius from other lands, bringing costly gems to enrich the foreign shrine, and gathering wild flowers to adorn the domestic altar"—a sentiment which is not without a certain primitive charm.

And then—it took place actually five days before the dinner—they gave Mr. Dickens a ball.

2

"The agony," as Mr. Hone called it; "the Boz ball, the greatest affair in modern times, the fullest libation ever poured upon the altar of the muses, the tallest compliment ever paid to a little man."

It was, certainly, a most extraordinary function, in which some three thousand persons—fortunate holders of tickets which five thousand other applicants had been unable to secure at any price—trod on each others' toes for several hours, milling and stramming about like a holiday crowd at the Zoo and in much the same spirit, and roared with laughter when the curtain went up, when the curtain came down, when the gong rang, when Mr. Dickens appeared, when Mr. Dickens did not appear, when Mr. Dickens finally did appear. . . .

The Park Theatre, displaying for the occasion an enormous quantity of green baize and furnished with chairs covered with white, gold fringed muslin, was the scene of this literary, terpsichorean extravaganza. In this present day of national emblems hastily draped across the front of a visiting celebrity's box,

with possibly an additional potted palm or two, by way of adequate decoration, one ponders, almost open mouthed, over the spectacle provided by the interior of "old Drury" on that memorable evening, and over the conception of magnificent and elegant ornamentation which it exemplifies. And suddenly one seems to recognise, and trace to their exalted origin, the garish illumination of countless modern ice cream parlors, the cheap brilliance of endless native main streets, the bunting festooned splendor of a host of amusement parks.

At all events, on the evening of February 14, 1842, the interior of the dome over the pit of the Park Theatre was covered with festoons of bunting hanging from a central golden rosette. The entire gallery, also, was concealed by bunting serving as a background for a series of statues representing Apollo and the Nine Muses, Cupid and Psyche, "and other ornaments," while in front of this tier were disposed portraits of all the Presidents down to Van Buren—there does not seem to have been room for Mr. Harrison or Mr. Tyler—with full length figures of Washington and Jefferson, the latter personifying the literary genius of the Revolution, a fact which must have left Mr. Dickens quite cold. The famous, and at the time still infamous, third tier, for its part, displayed the arms of each State under a trophy of English and American flags.

But no one can have paid much attention to the third tier, for the eye would scarcely have wandered

above the second, where each of the sixteen boxes was fitted up with red striped drapery in the form of a tent, the curtains being of blue material ornamented with twenty-six stars. The pillars supporting these boxes were covered with gold tissue worked muslin, with "gold slabs" placed before each compartment. In addition to this, all along the front of this tier appeared garlanded medallions containing the titles of Mr. Dickens's works, "interspersed with" eight large stars surrounded with wreaths, while in the centre hung a portrait of Boz, also surrounded by a wreath, and surmounted by a golden eagle holding a laurel crown in his beak. And, in order to leave no space unoccupied, there were also "interspersed around fourteen figures after the antique." Someone had evidently taken a great deal of trouble over this tier.

But there were further wonders. The pillars of the proscenium were wrapped in striped bunting and embellished with silk banners bearing "appropriate devices" and portraits of Boz. On top of the orchestra was a row of guitars and tambourines. Immediately in front of the orchestra were five somewhat incomprehensible "golden compartments festooned with wreaths"; and in the middle of all this stood "a large golden Maypole with an eagle on the top and wreaths pendant therefrom to two golden pillars at each extremity."

A "complete blaze" of five hundred lights, irrespective of those on the stage, shone on this glorified fire trap, derived from two chandeliers suspended

above the pit by golden ropes, an astral lamp and two golden candelabras of twelve candles each, resting on golden columns, at the entrance to every box, and six astral lamps hanging from the proscenium pillars. The wonder is that the entire establishment did not go up in a complete blaze, in fact,

"the committee deserved the lasting gratitude of the whole community for their vigilance in looking after the lights, and when one considers that there were over three thousand persons present moving about amongst all this blaze of light, a majority of them in muslin dresses, with crepe, lace, ribbons and gauze streaming about in all directions, it was next to a miracle and owing to the mercy of Providence that no accident occurred by fire."

The mercy of Providence was fortunately always available in the Forties, but her patience must frequently have been severely strained. One does not envy those gentlemen of the committee, somehow. . . .

Comparatively few people, from the floor, can have had more than a glimpse of what was taking place on it, but the stage itself furnished some of the most "chaste and beautiful" features of the evening. They had widened it to an extent of sixty feet and thrown it open all the way back to Theatre Alley, and in this space they had erected a—

"splendid chamber of carved and gilded oak, with a magnificent ceiling to match, of the Elizabethan age, and very much like one of those gorgeous rooms in

the Duke of Beaufort's mansion overlooking the Wye near Monmouth."

Six golden chandeliers and sixteen equally golden bracket candelabras, besides one hundred and ten gaslights with glass shades, cast their perilous radiance upon the panels of this chamber, on which, suitably framed in "beautiful and appropriate" draperies, appeared a series of twenty "highly finished, graphic medallion tableaux" representing scenes from the works of Boz. Needless to say *Little Nell* figured prominently in this gallery, at least four panels being devoted to her activities.

At the rear of the stage stood a platform, concealed by a drop curtain, painted to imitate the frontispiece of *Pickwick Papers* and exhibiting all the characters in that work, which must doubtless have served for a long time to keep the audience amused and contented, picking out its favorites. Finally, to the sound of a large gong which seems to have delighted everyone, this drop curtain rose twelve times to reveal a succession of *tableaux vivants* depicting incidents in the novels, Washington Irving in England, and Charles Dickens in America.

For some contagious reason—perhaps it was the gong—these tableaux were received with screams of merriment, culminating in an uproar of astonishing levity when, upon the appearance in one of them of a silly looking little short gentleman in a green velvet suit, someone cried out "There he is! There's Boz!" The audience shrieked with laughter and saw nothing

incongruous, apparently, in this ribald caricaturing of its guest of honor. It had paid to visit the monkey house and proposed to hoot as much as it pleased at the chief monkey. All in a spirit of the highest good humor. If he had been present at the moment, Mr. Dickens would have been expected to laugh as loudly as anyone.

3

At last, shortly after nine o'clock, there came a louder and more persistent ringing of the gong, the crowd surged noisily forward towards the stage, and there was Mr. Dickens, escorted by the Mayor and attended by Mr. Hone and a number of other perspiring gentlemen. The Mayor made a speech to which nobody dreamed of listening. The committee presented "an elegant bouquet" to Mrs. Dickens, arranged according to the language of flowers, and containing amaranth for immortality, campanula for gratitude, daphiodiora for sweets to the sweet, volkamenica japonica for may you be happy, scarlet flowered spoona for attachment, and a great many more sweet smelling sentiments. Mr. Dickens "breathed heavily, and cast one look up at the house, partly curious, partly bewildered, partly satiric, and a good deal humorous." Mr. Hone stood in the centre of the stage and scratched the end of his nose.

And then because Mr. Dickens was so short that two thirds of the audience were unable to see him—and probably said so in loud and unmistakable tones

—they paraded him around the dance floor. Three enterprising members of the committee plunged into the crush and cleared a precarious path for Mr. Dickens, escorting the Mayoress, followed by Mrs. Dickens on the arm of the Mayor, whereupon the entire assemblage fell in behind, whooping and cheering like a Sunday school class at a picnic. A delightful scene betraying the exuberant good spirits underlying the deceptive formality of that paradoxical period.

Then they managed to dance for a few moments, somehow. One of those quadrilles, or cotillions, or waltzes, which should have occurred between each of the tableaux. Or rather, Mr. Dickens hopped about with the Mayoress while the rest looked on and giggled. When last seen, coming out of the twenty-two hundred dollar supper room, Mr. Dickens appeared slightly fatigued. . . .

4

And then that horrid little man went home and wrote his dreadful *American Notes,* which do not seem so very dreadful now, even though he did remark that in the river steamer dining saloons—

"those who help themselves several times . . . usually suck their knives and forks meditatively until they have decided what to take next, then pull them out of their mouths, put them in the dish, help themselves, and fall to work again";

and that in all the public places in America the filthy custom of tobacco chewing and expectorating was recognised, it being often necessary to put up notices requesting that the spittoons invariably supplied be used in preference to the floor. But in November, 1842, so soon after the pleasant amenities of the Park Theatre ball, the book aroused a tempest of resentment.

The first copy reached New York, on the steamer *Great Western,* at six o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday, November 6. In nineteen hours the New York *Herald* had had the whole book reprinted. Fifty thousand copies were sold in the city during the next two days, while in Philadelphia the first consignment of three thousand copies was disposed of in half an hour. "It will cause a sensation throughout the United States," the *Herald* warned its readers on the morning of November 7. "Don't burst, keep cool—be quiet!"

But the *Herald* itself, after printing extracts from "this singular and curious brochure" on its front page for two days, burst finally, on the second morning, in a fit of overheated rage, in which it observed editorially that these racy extracts comprised the principal portions of the *Notes* and the results drawn by Boz "from the facts, scenes, incidents, and events with which that famous penny-a-liner became acquainted in this country." The rest was "all leather and prunella, hardly worth the trouble of perusal, and certainly not entitled to any further attention from any sensible man either American or European."

Whereupon, in a long article, the editor went on to describe Mr. Dickens's mind as "the most coarse, vulgar, impudent, and superficial that ever had the courage to write about the ideas and institutions of this original and remarkable country," and to state the opinion that "his view of the fermentative character of this land is the view taken by a narrow minded, conceited cockney." After which Mr. Dickens was dismissed with a paragraph of brilliant critical invective in which it developed that—

"of all the travelers that have ever visited this land he appears to have been the most flimsy—the most childish—the most trashy—the most contemptible. He has neither common grammar, sense, arrangement, or generalisation . . . he seems to be the essence of balderdash, reduced to the last drop of silliness and inanity."

Oh, they were extremely angry—and all that good money gone for nothing on bunting, and medallions of Boz, and golden Maypoles. . . .

5

But Mr. Dickens was not the only topic of metropolitan conversation in that year of 1842. There was another subject which occupied all minds, as perhaps no other civic matter had done since the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. A matter of dams, too, and of excavations and tunnelings—the introduction into the city of the Croton Water. "Nothing is talked

of or thought of in New York but Croton Water," Mr. Hone wrote in October.

"Fountains, aqueducts, hydrants, and hose attract our attention and impede our progress through the streets. . . . It is astonishing how popular the introduction of water is among all classes of our citizens, and how cheerfully they acquiesce in the enormous expense which will burden them and their posterity with taxes to the latest generation. Water, water, is the universal note which is sounded through every part of the city, and infuses joy and exultation into the masses."

In its early days the city had depended on the old Tea Water Pump, near the corner of Pearl and Chatham Streets, for its water supply. In 1799 the Manhattan Company had been chartered to introduce "pure and wholesome water," which it attempted to do by pumping it out of the Collect Pond. Again in 1823 the Sharon Canal Company, and in 1825 the New York Water Works, had been established for the same purpose but with no lasting results. The real trouble was that these private companies had all been too busy exercising the banking privileges included in their charters to spend any serious thought on the question of water. The corporation finally established public cisterns, located generally in the street in front of the churches, which remained in use until 1829, when the Fire Department recommended that they be abolished, and a tank erected in Thirteenth Street, on the outskirts of the City, to be

filled with "pure and wholesome water" from West Chester. From 1829 until 1842 this small tank with its lines of pipe down Broadway and the Bowery served as the principal means of metropolitan water supply and fire fighting resource.

In 1831 the continuing growth of the city, and the constantly increasing danger from fires, induced the Board of Aldermen to submit to the Common Council a project of law authorising the raising of funds by loan for the purpose, once more, of introducing "pure and wholesome water," which the Common Council approved, recommending the Bronx River as a suitable source. But the legislature, shaken by the estimate of two million dollars accompanying this proposal, refused to pass the law. In 1832, however, the Corporation invited Colonel De Witt Clinton to examine the possibilities of the Croton River, this time, and upon his endorsement the legislature, in 1834, went so far as to appoint Commissioners to report on the scheme.

These excellent gentlemen "brought industry, honesty and judgment to the consideration of the important subject committed to their charge"; they argued over every conceivable sort of suggestion from that of damming up the Hudson River at Greenwich to that of towing boxlike craft up the river, filling them with fresh water, and then towing them down again to be "elevated by means of steam power" and emptied into various receptacles; they waged tremendous engineering contests over the merits of

iron pipe and arched aqueducts; and, at last, in April, 1835, their findings were approved by the Common Council and ratified by a popular vote of some seventeen to six thousand. Work was begun at once on the aqueducts, bridges and dams, and on the reservoirs at Fortieth Street and at Eighty-Sixth, way out in the country. There were, one is told, in this series of structures fifty-five million bricks and seven hundred thousand cubic yards of masonry, and the great Harlem River bridge was destined to be "one of the most stupendous works of the kind in the world."

Now, in 1842, the people of New York had obtained "the great desideratum, an abundant supply of pure and wholesome water"—the phrase was on every tongue—"to be sure at a great cost, nine millions of dollars." But whereas the aqueducts of Rome had been built by soldiers and slaves, this one "was voted for by freemen, and constructed by freemen, and it was the aspiration of its builders that in all ages to come it might bless freemen, and freemen only."

The construction of this aqueduct from a point forty-five miles distant from the Battery, and "spanning twenty-five streams in West Chester alone," was undeniably a brilliant civic achievement in that period of limited mechanical appliances and financial panics, a renewed indication of the robust spirit of American enterprise, and its completion was greeted with expressions of exuberant satisfaction in all parts of the community. Aside from its obvious value in connec-

tion with fire prevention—although it was not to prevent the disastrous conflagration of 1845—it was bound to bring about great ameliorations in domestic conditions. "By the almost mysterious property of water, the Croton, without steam power, animal or human labor," was to descend into the cellar, and again "mount into the garret of the loftiest houses, even up into the cupola of the City Hall." From the standpoint of morality,

"filth and crime, and cleanliness and virtue, are near kinsfolks, and the more means and conveniences for cleanliness that are furnished the population the more industrious and virtuous they will be. The more good water that is conveniently supplied the more temperate will be our people, because we shall now no longer afford the poor apology for mixing brandy and rum with water—that of making it drinkable."

So, in 1842, with "a Croton banner floating to the breeze," the Temperance cause endeavored, and very successfully, to drown the saloons in a flood of pure and wholesome water.

And that was not all. The island of Manhattan was peculiarly fitted for the site of a great city,

"blessed with a salubrious climate; surrounded by water forming links of natural and practicable communication with adjacent sister States and with the boundless and fertile regions of the West; connected by a short and uninterrupted passage with the ocean, the pathway from foreign climes; placed in a position combining natural advantages for a large com-

munity, devoted to the prosecution of commerce and the arts, unsurpassed by those of any other spot on the globe."

In the past only one thing was lacking. Now the obstacles were removed—

"the hills have been pierced—the stream has been overleaped—the rock has been smitten. Nature, yielding to human industry, perseverance and skill, no longer withholds the boon she had denied. A river whose pure waters are gathered from the mountain range, arrested and diverted in its course, after pouring its tribute through a permanent and spacious archway, at length reaches our magnificent reservoirs. . . ."

One likes to hear them talk. They are so sure of themselves, so conscious of their importance to posterity, so proud of their success, so confident of the future. The fresh newness of the land, the generous vision, the tremendous bustle of that age so akin to the present one in fabulous possibilities, the immense vitality of it all, come out so clearly in everything that they say. "Long may this work endure," they cried,

"to illustrate the wisdom of its founders, a monument of the enterprise and perseverance of our people, and the source of health, safety, and happiness for successive ages."

It was—

"the proudest day for the city that its inhabitants had ever seen since the discovery of this part of the world by Hendrick Hudson, and perhaps since the fast

anchored isle of Manhattan emerged from the general deluge,"

and they celebrated it with characteristic determination.

6

It was a great day for everyone except possibly the Eleventh Ward Hose Company who lost their American eagle—the bird having "become uneasy from his position on top of the carriage" and escaped to the high hills of West Chester—and the Superintendent of Hacks who spent all his time clearing barouches out of the line of march. The festivities began at dawn with the firing of cannon which gave the signal for all the fountains in town to "send forth the limpid stream of the Croton," and with the pealing of bells, "at the sound of whose merry notes over half a million of souls leaped simultaneously from their slumbers and their beds, and dressed themselves as for a gladsome gala day, a general jubilee"; one on which the sun had arisen "in unclouded splendor and majesty," as though the "Supreme Ruler of the Universe looked down with delight upon the celebration of an event fraught with so many blessings to the Queen City of the greatest nation upon earth."

Out of their beds, and into their clothes, and down into the streaming streets—it was estimated that over two hundred thousand strangers had come to town from the surrounding country—and by nine o'clock every window, house, sidewalk, balcony, roof, awning

post, lamp post, ridge, hydrant, chimney, railing, tree, and "every conceivable spot on which a foot could touch was occupied by anxious spectators." Every thoroughfare was—

"crammed with the living, moving multitude; old men of ninety tottering side by side with feeble infants, mingled up with females of every age, rank, condition, and complexion, were in the mighty throng. Fourscore and ten forgot its infirmity, and woman disremembered the delicacy of her sex to catch even a passing glimpse of the procession."

They never tired, in the Forties, of expatiating on the presence of feminine spectators, and on the crowded condition of the streets. There was, unquestionably, a special virtue in numbers which appealed to their materialistic imaginations. On this occasion, the whole town was crowded, "mostly with lovely female faces," and from the Battery to Union Square "it was nothing but a perfect sea of heads, while the blaze of beauty up Broadway was absolutely enchanting, there being at least fifty thousand women spectators in this space alone." All along the Bowery "the galaxy of beauty was bewitching," and in Chatham Street "the houses were literally hid with human faces." But the crowning scene of the day was East Broadway. "Here the loveliness of the ladies surpassed belief, and the elegance and neatness of dress, beauty of form and feature of the belles of East Broadway will long be remembered by those who saw them." As for the Park, it was "crammed full of

people in every part, all happy, well dressed, sober, and determined to be delighted."

Alas for lovers—pair by pair the wind has blown them all away; the young and yare, the fond and fair —where are the belles of East Broadway. . . .

Aside from that, there was a great deal of water to be seen in the streets. "The star of temperance seemed indeed to have been illuminated, and the blessing of water duly appreciated. In all directions and in all forms, the limpid waters met the eye," and, very probably, trickled down the neck.

In the Park, the lovely fountain began to play at noon, "throwing its column of sparkling water fifty feet into the air," forming a beautiful rainbow, while "the multitude of smaller pipes that encircled the basin sent their minor streams inward as if bowing in deference to the superior vigor of the main jet." In the Bowery another fountain "sent the leaping waters sparkling towards Heaven." But it was in Grand Street—filled as usual with beauty and fashion in fine array—that they had entered most heartily into the aquatic spirit of the day. Here all the hydrants were playing, creating "bubbling brooks" down both gutters, while at alternate corners they had erected pipes to form "small but beautiful *jets d'eau.*" Everybody got very wet in Grand Street.

7

At nine o'clock as many people as could possibly

get anywhere near the City Hall flocked to witness the presentation by the Mayor of the "magnificent Croton banner" to the Fire Department.

It was, of course, a day of particular glorification for the forty-six metropolitan volunteer fire companies, in which the ten deputations of visiting firemen from neighboring cities shared extensively. Four thousand firemen marched in the procession, occupying a space of more than two miles, special attention being aroused by the Fairmount Engine and Neptune Hose from Philadelphia, the Northern Liberties Engine, also of Philadelphia, with its six white horses and neat uniforms consisting of red shirts, black pants and belts, and Hook and Ladder Company No. 7 from Harlem, "most beautifully surmounted with arches composed of evergreens, box and dahlias, and two small boys in the act of ascending and descending the ladders erected in the centre of the car." Undoubtedly the proudest pair of citizens in the whole United States, on the morning of October 14, 1842. . . .

In accepting the "elegant token" of the high regard and estimation of the Common Council, Mr. Pentz, President of the Fire Department, referred to the completion of "one of the most stupendous public works of the Union or of the age," and assured the Mayor that the firemen,

"with that devotion to their duties by which they have ever been distinguished, rejoiced chiefly because this great work, in giving increased efficiency to their

exertions, afforded additional security to the property of their fellow citizens."

Whereupon he placed the token on a carpeted car, drawn by four white horses led by "coal black attendants topped off with turbans," to be borne at the head of his division in the parade.

The banner itself showed, on the front, the fire department—

"as having achieved a victory over the devouring element, receiving the blessings and thanks of the widow and her orphans for the protection and blessings derived from it—beautiful emblems of power and beneficence, helplessness and gratitude. They are attended by a 'hero of the flames.' Erect, above all stands old Father Neptune, evidently delighted with the victory he has accomplished over his ancient enemy the demon of fire, by the aid of his skilful and intrepid allies, the Firemen of New York."

On the back,

"the Queen of Cities, represented by a female wearing a crown, is calling attention to a picture—a view of the dam on the Croton River, the origin of the aqueduct. On the lower part of the border surrounding the picture are emblazoned the arms of the city in *basso relievo.*"

The banner was of rich, mazarene blue silk, with crimson and amber fringes, tassels and cords. It was surmounted, moreover, "and greatly adorned," by three groups of carvings,

"the centre consisting of a fireman's cap as a vase, with a trumpet affixed to the top on which stands a large eagle with extended wings measuring three feet from tip to tip, while at each end are trophies composed of hook and ladder, torch, trumpet, pipe, and axes."

They always did things very thoroughly in that day.

And while these solemnities were being conducted, hundreds of persons who had found it impossible to jam their way into the Park probably went to the Castle Garden, to watch the troops gathering on the Battery, and to witness the "novel and thrilling spectacle of the Centrifugal Railway," admission twenty-five cents. An astounding contrivance of cast iron, consisting of two inclined planes and a perpendicular circle, around the interior of which a car containing a passenger was carried by its own momentum, "the passenger and car being at one time UPSIDE DOWN!" And yet, not so many years ago, looping the loop was considered a fresh proof of man's endless ingenuity. . . .

8

Sixteen thousand persons, not including the firemen, marched in the procession which stretched around the entire route for a distance of seven miles from the City Hall to Union Square and back to that edifice. Headed by the Sing Sing Guards, "on they came, that glorious pageant, company after company, battalion succeeding battalion, division after divi-

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THE CROTON WATER CELEBRATION IN 1842

sion." The Commissioners of the Croton Aqueduct in open barouches; the Society of the Cincinnati, in two carriages "filled with aged and venerable men"; the Mayors of New York, Brooklyn, Albany, Troy, Jersey City, and Newark; the foreign Consuls, also in open barouches, that of Her Britannic Majesty's representative being drawn by—

"four splendid horses, tastefully decorated, while the carriage bore the English and American flags united with the olive branch and surmounted with the plume of the Prince of Wales,"

the card appended to this fantasy reading "Mother and Daughter united, the Peace of the World preserved"; the Masonic Fraternity with the Bible on which George Washington had taken his presidential oath of office; and a large exhibit of Croton water pipes.

And then, a little boat, seven feet long, mounted on a carriage, in which were seated several little girls bearing the inscription "The Sisters of Croton Lake"; the Typographical Society with a press used in England by Benjamin Franklin, on which copies of the Croton Ode were being printed for distribution to the crowd; a model of the steamboat *North America;* the Phoenix Foundry Association with a float on which appeared workmen "engaged in the ordinary avocations of this extensive industry"; and "the hearty and robust butchers of New York and Brooklyn," five hundred strong, attired in white aprons and checked

sleeves, and accompanied by two conveyances showing a farmer's yard and a butcher's headquarters in which "a magnificent stuffed ox formed a centrepiece of attraction to which all eyes were turned."

As for the Society of Gold and Silver Artisans, they carried with them, "on a table borne by neatly dressed colored men, several hundred pieces of silver and gold of elegant and costly workmanship"—among them a wreath of fine gold, two glass cups containing "pure silver in the lump and virgin gold in the purified state," and an assortment of bracelets, vases and goblets—"which," as well they might,

"attracted the eyes of every man, woman and child, and especially the scrutinising propensities of the thieves, burglars and pickpockets who were largely in attendance. It was a rich and tempting sight such as is rarely seen in the public streets of this busy city."

There was nothing like it, certainly, to be observed in a recent civic parade which displayed its shoddy length along the chief avenues of the same metropolis.

The procession closed with the Benevolent Associations—in whose ranks were especially noticed "a large and exceedingly respectable society of Germans called the Sons of Herman," and an Italian organisation preceded by a banner representing Charity personified by "a female feeding birds in their nest" —and the Temperance Societies which shared the honors of the day with the firemen and the hearty and robust butchers,

"led by a barouche containing a delegation of temperance firemen from Baltimore, and including the Happy Wife, the Lady Franklin, the German Hand in Hand, and the Rockland Lake Association with a car drawn by four horses containing the implements used in obtaining ice from the lake, as well as a splendid cake of ice that traveled the whole route of the procession and was finally used to cool the lemonade at the collation in the Superior Court Room."

And, at that, no one had a chance at the collation until they had finished singing the seven verses of the Ode written for the occasion by no less a person than Mr. G. P. Morris, which began—

"Gently o'er the rippling water
In her coral shallop bright
Glides the rock king's dove eyed daughter
Decked in robes of virgin white.
Nymphs and naiads sweetly smiling
Urge her bark with pearly hand,
Merrily the Sylph beguiling
From the nooks of fairy land—"

and ended, after a good deal of versification about Pale Contagion and the Baffled Demon Fire, as follows—

"Round the aqueducts of story
As the mists of Lethe throng,
Croton's waves in all their glory
Troop in melody along.

Ever sparkling, bright and single
Will this rock ribbed stream appear,
When posterity shall mingle
Like the gathered waters here."

Then, and only then, was the lemonade served.

So "the lengthening stream of the bold, the brave, the useful, the scientific, and the philanthropic rolled on." It was two hours and a half from the time the foremost troops had reached Union Square that "the last man in the procession was seen retiring in the distance down the Bowery." There is something pathetic, and enormously intriguing, somehow, about this last, lonely figure. . . .

9

The parade was over, but the day was far from done. For those who were still "determined to be delighted" there were many attractions remaining to be viewed.

There was the forty-sixth aerial voyage of Mr. Lauriat "in his splendid Balloon, the Star of the East, a richly decorated car," at the Castle Garden. There were "Powerful Attractions! Extraordinary Novelties! ! Unprecedented Amusements! ! ! Astonishing Entertainments! ! ! !"—including Signor Blitz the wonderful magician and ventriloquist, and an exhibition of glass blowing—at the New York Museum and Picture Gallery. And there were hourly "performances of the most splendid descrip-

tion" at Mr. Barnum's American Museum and Garden. Twenty balloon ascensions from the roof. Doctor Valentine, the comic lecturer and delineator of American whims and oddities, with his dissertations on Stage Coach Travel, Mrs. Gabbletongue, and the Napoleon Debaters. Mr. Nellis, born without arms, "who by his untiring perseverance has acquired the power of using his feet with as much facility as other people use their hands." Signor Vivaldi's Grand Mechanical Figures, consisting of eleven automaton performers representing all the movements of human life "with a fidelity perfectly incredible." And a model of Switzerland, a den of living snakes, and five hundred thousand other curiosities. All for twenty-five cents.

And, of course, the—

"splendid gas sun with seven hundred burners, erected on the outside of the Museum, and decorated in the most superb and magnificent manner with gold and silver mirrors, at an expense of nearly one thousand dollars."

These served to pass the time in the afternoon.

In the evening there was an illumination of the Astor House, in the course of which its sixty-one windows were lighted up with seven hundred and thirty-two candles, "and what is astonishing the whole of these were lighted up in twenty-seven seconds." There was a grand ball at Washington Hall. At

Niblo's Theatre the Ravels were doing *Godenski,* and the magnificent comic pantomime *Mazulme, or the Night Owl.* The Chatham offered *The Loss of the Royal George,* followed by *Croton Water,* and ending with *Timour the Tartar,* for the modest sum of fifty cents. The Park was giving *London Assurance, The Irish Lion,* and the local burletta *The Croton Celebration.* But the majority of people probably went back to the Castle Garden for the Splendid Exhibition of Fireworks—

"A beautiful and favorite piece called Pride of Aurora. A magnificent and beautiful piece called Boquet of Flora. A splendid and amusing piece called the Prussian Viermorelle. The beautiful and magnificent piece called the Chinese Plantain Tree. A superb and interesting piece called the Star of Venice. A new botanical piece styled the Persian Flower. A flight of Panfaronades. To conclude with the admired and beautiful piece, of surpassing brilliancy and effect, called Roses and Diamonds, or Memento of '42. This piece will commence with a Circle of Circles, exhibiting in their revolutions the American Star of Independence, changing to the emblematical piece in which there will be a grand display of Military Pyrotechny consisting of Bombs, Maroons, Signal Fires, Pots de Brins, and Mines, terminating with a motto of Croton Water, 1842, in lance work."

A great many fireworks for fifty cents. The evening ended, appropriately enough, in a downpour of pure and wholesome rain water. . . .

10

The Grand Celebration
and
ILLUMINATION
in
New York City
In honor of the Victories
of
PALO ALTO
Reseca de la Palma
Monterey
BUENA VISTA
Vera Cruz
Two hundred thousand human beings
in the streets
ETC., ETC., ETC.

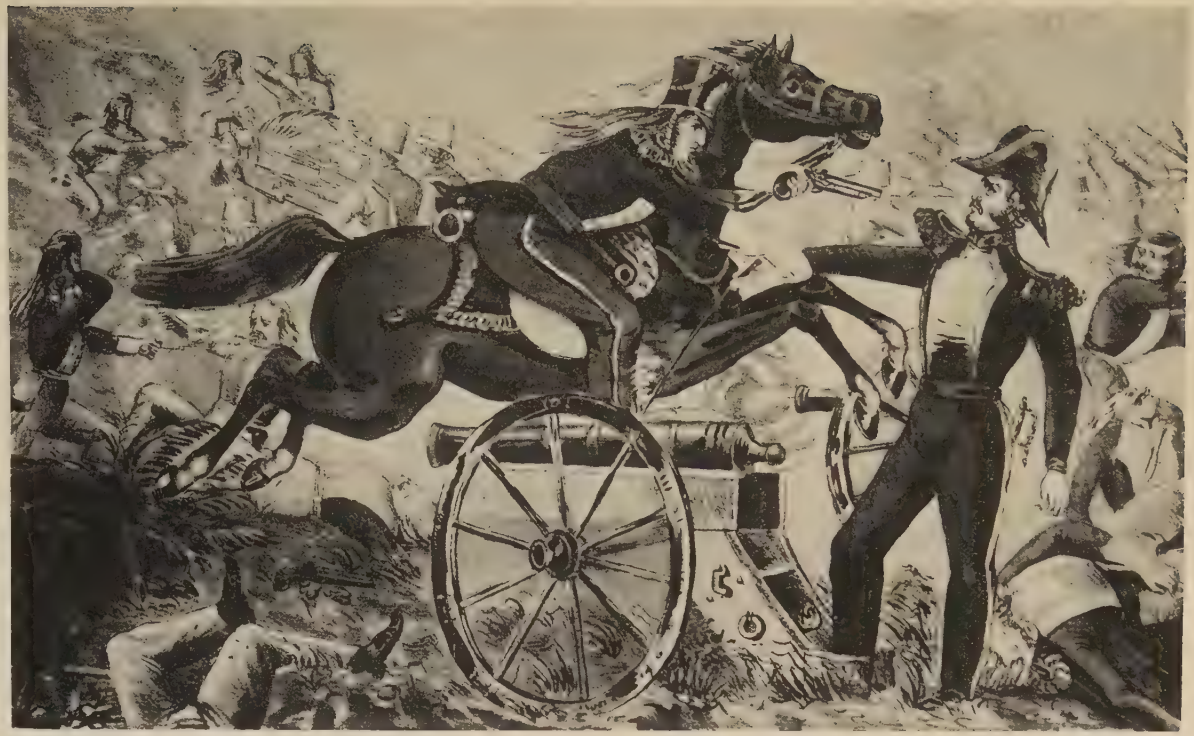
It is the morning of May 8, 1847; among the despatches from Mexico on the second page of the New York *Herald* is the news of yet another victory, that of Cerro Gordo, and of Santa Anna's ludicrous flight on his mule; but one prefers to linger over the front page for a while in order to see it all again. . . .

"The City presented a grand and gorgeous spectacle from sunrise to late at night. At sunrise the booming of American cannon from the Battery re-

sounded from the Narrows to the Palisades. The repeated echoes had not died away when, as if by the hand of an invisible sorcerer, ten thousand flags and banners of bunting, of brilliant hue and large dimensions, were thrown to the breeze and floated gaily and joyfully over the City Hall, Custom House and other buildings. At noon a salute of one hundred guns was fired from the Battery, Washington Square, Tompkins Square, and Harlem. At two o'clock the Military formed in order.

"A more beautiful day for the procession could not have been asked for. . . . Preparations for the march were early discoverable—clean and handsome uniforms were seen here and there throughout the city, dodging about in every direction. . . . Towards noon the military began to rendezvous by companies, and squads of hussars, lancers and dragoons were seen galloping towards their appointed ground, while infantry, rifles and staunch artillery men made their way to their arsenals. . . .

"Two o'clock being the time appointed for the procession to leave the Battery—an hour before that time found Broadway crowded with pedestrians of all ages, conditions, sizes, and colors. The elite and the unwashed million rushed, by common consent, towards the Battery. . . . Women with babies, old gentlemen with little boys, and old ladies with half grown girls in charge all crowded, and elbowed, and fretted in a most delectable manner. The police were on the ground and their services were necessary to keep the omnibuses, carts and cabs in order. Boys in their teens fired off pistols, and the younger urchins their torpedoes and fire crackers among the crowd, and cheered with the greatest enthusiasm as company after company of our citizen soldiers wheeled into line



THE BATTLE OF RESACA DE LA PALMA, MAY 9, 1846

The Capture of General Vega by the gallant Captain May

From a contemporary lithograph

or threaded the gravel walks to their appointed places.

"The scene on the Battery was indeed imposing. . . . Dashing officers in bright uniforms mounted upon proud chargers pranced about the ground—adjutants flew from post to post—companies marched, counter marched, and then stood sternly by their arms. . . . Those hardy sons of the cleaver as cavalry, the sharp shooting riflemen, with an infantry force hardly surpassed in discipline, would be a hard nut for any foe to crack."

The gaudily plumed and sabretached militiamen of countless old colored prints seem to come to life and march stiffly across the page. One leaves them to their inspection by General Sandford, and turns to the evening festivities.

"At sunset the city began to pour its inhabitants into the streets to witness the magnificent illuminations and fireworks. The surrounding country sent its thousands over the different ferries to join in the same pleasure; the streets were never so densely crowded, nay packed, with human beings.

"Broadway appeared to be in one grand blaze of light. The Castle Garden was illuminated in a splendid and gorgeous manner . . . and the house at No. 17 Broadway was illuminated from top to bottom with gas. The fourth story was illuminated with four large stars, each having eight gas burners—the second and third were filled with transparencies with the names of all the celebrated officers of the army and navy. But the principal attraction was the window on the uptown side of the house. Inside of it were exhibited seven small wreaths of evergreens of natural

flowers, enclosed in one large one, each bearing the name of some departed brave, and in the centre the words 'We rejoice yet mourn.' On one side stood large trees hanging over it like weeping willows, and on the other a large figure of a weeping lady. . . .

"The City Hotel was a complete blaze of fire. . . . The Croton Hotel shed the lustre of myriads of lights from its many windows, while on its balcony a splendid band enlivened the scene with the most agreeable and refreshing music. . . . Rathbun's Hotel next occupied the attention of the million. It was much admired, not because it was illuminated in as splendid a manner as any public building that had been viewed between it and the Battery, but because it was adorned with several splendid transparencies. Names dear to the heart of every American were exhibited in front and appreciated by a buzz of applause during the entire evening. . . . The Franklin House was behind none of its compeers in its endeavors to add brilliancy to the festive scene. From top to bottom it was illuminated and decorated in a really beautiful and chaste manner. The perfect accuracy with which the candles were arranged and the strong light which they cast on the neighborhood were remarked by all. . . ."

11

"The Herald Building was the great attraction in the lower part of the city. From the topmost story to the basement it was resplendent with beauty and glory. One hundred and fourteen flags, large and small, military and naval, were suspended from it. . . . At eight o'clock precisely a rocket was discharged from the lofty roof and before the whizz which marked its flight towards Heaven became in-

audible the nine hundred and fifty candles which had been previously placed in the eight hundred and ninety panes of glass which the building contains, together with the innumerable variegated lamps which were so adjusted as to compose a beautiful star in front of the building on Fulton Street, were instantaneously ignited. A loud huzza followed this exhibition and innumerable were the compliments which the *coup d'œil* elicited. It was acknowledged by all who saw it as a splendid sight.

"On the front of the publication office, the windows of which were gorgeously illuminated with an infinite quantity of sperm candles, was exhibited a transparency listing the American victories in Mexico . . . while from each window the stars and stripes, the freemen's banner, was pendant. . . . The chimneys, too, were decorated. On top of each was a brilliant Chinese lantern which added much to the general effect. . . .

"Proceeding further, the Astor House and the American Hotel with all their splendor burst upon us. Both of these great buildings were magnificently and tastefully illuminated and decorated. On the topmost summit of each building was the unfurled flag of the Union waving gaily and gloriously in the evening breeze. The Astor House shone resplendent with its innumerable lights which cast their refulgent rays on the street and the Park in front, and on the ten thousand admiring citizens congregated there. . . . Attached to the front of the building was a beautiful transparency. At a given signal the match was applied and in an instant was successively displayed a magnificent spectacle, exhibiting in transcendently beautiful colors the names of the principal victories in Mexico. A loud and prolonged cheer followed these

brilliant demonstrations, and while the ten thousand admiring spectators were praising the patriotism of the proprietors of that extensive establishment they were attracted to the American Hotel, which appeared to vie with every other public place in giving *éclat* to the great celebration.

"This favorite resort of our army and navy officers presented a spectacle that reflected the greatest credit on all concerned in getting it up. It was illuminated with one thousand candles and from top to bottom presented a scene seldom seen. . . . In the course of the evening a well arranged continuation of fireworks, extending the whole width of the building, was fired and presented in variegated and dazzling splendor the words 'Taylor—Scott—Army and Navy—Perry.' Words cannot express the outburst of enthusiasm with which this magnificent display was greeted. It appeared as if ten thousand times ten thousand grateful voices were strained to the utmost in approbation of it, so terrifically loud were they. . . .

"At the City Hall three thousand six hundred and forty-eight sperm candles and seven hundred variegated lamps were used, while around the top of the building were illuminated transparencies bearing the names of the American victories. . . . A great variety of beautiful rockets were discharged, and altogether the scene may be more readily imagined than described. . . ."

12

"It was impossible to continue up Broadway. The reporters were unable to make their way through the immense mass of human beings that blocked up that great thoroughfare with men, women and children, omnibuses, private carriages, hacks, and cabs.

. . . In general from the American Hotel to the uppermost part of the city Broadway was superbly gorgeous. . . . Among other public buildings in the upper part of the city Tammany Hall looked most majestic as usual. . . . There were no less than seven hundred and ninety-five lights in its hundred and one windows, and there were also no less than twenty-one red lights on the balcony. . . .

"In turning from Broadway into Park Row the most conspicuous of the brilliant objects which attracted the eyes of the many thousands assembled was the Park Theatre. This time honored building shone conspicuous on the occasion. . . . Old Drury was not backward in making a suitable demonstration within its walls. Mr. Pierson sang a patriotic song worthy of the occasion, and a large transparent likeness of General Taylor, the hero of Buena Vista, was exhibited to the admiring thousands who attended to witness the performance of Forrest, the American tragedian. . . .

"The Bowery was illuminated in grand style. The shops and small public houses near Chatham Square lit up nobly and as the numbers increased so did the brilliancy of the display. . . . The Bowery Theatre had a large transparency representing Generals Scott and Taylor, each mounted upon his charger, the hero of Vera Cruz dressed in full uniform, and he of Buena Vista in his frock coat and broad rimmed beaver. . . . In the street, at the crossing of Hester Street, was a small brass cannon which was most industriously loaded and fired by a company of young patriotic individuals, much to the danger of the nerves of numerous ladies. . . .

"The sidewalks in the Bowery were literally crowded with passengers. The crowd kept increasing

as it approached Chatham Street where the sidewalks were found to be entirely too narrow to afford a passage to the thousands and thousands of persons who were crowding towards the Park. The carriage way was at last resorted to and this also now became excessively crowded. The immense concourse of persons pressing through various thoroughfares to the Bowery, and thence down Chatham Street to the Park, soon had the effect to completely fill not only the Park itself, but the squares and open streets in the neighborhood, and the crowd still pressing down from above, affairs began to assume an alarming aspect. The crowd below became alarmed and turned to make their way back. This movement of course had the effect to choke Chatham Street completely, and at about nine o'clock not only Chatham Street but Chatham Square also was completely filled with one dense though moving mass of humanity. All the side streets were now sought with the utmost eagerness . . . and the wonder is that there were no sad mishaps to mar the grand celebration."

13

But the great outstanding wonder, surely—with flaming lights in every window and fireworks popping from every roof—is that the city itself was not burned to the ground. One would like to know, also, whether the proprietors of public buildings furnished the reporters with lists of their variegated lamps and sperm candles, or whether the latter stood in the street, craning their necks to count them one by one. And one would give a great deal to have seen those Chinese lanterns on the chimneys of the Astor House roof.

And one does almost see them—and the magnificent illuminations of the American Hotel, and the weeping lady in her window on Broadway—shining through the closely printed columns; and hear the clamor of rapturous huzzas, and the tread of those densely packed thousands in Chatham Street, echoing from the pompous paragraphs of that inimitable account. Faintly, in a paling blaze of reckless incandescence, one catches the commotion, the prodigious energy, the boundless capacity for simple delights, the vigorous enthusiasm, the splendid intensity of that tumultuous era—already in its closing years, almost at the threshold of its last, fabulous impetuosity. . . .

CHAPTER XI

HO! FOR CALIFORNIA!

1

In 1840, all that was known in the East of California, the Spaniards' California, was that it was a land of sunshine and orange trees filled with the tinkle of monastery bells and the strumming of love-sick guitars, where beautiful ladies with combs in their hair looked down from latticed balconies upon dashing, handsome and lazily haughty cavaliers as they rode with great jingling silver spurs into the courtyards of arcaded *ranchos*. At Yerba Buena, or San Francisco as some called it, American whalers occasionally put in for water, and found a bay and a row of adobe huts on a sandy beach. In the whole of California there were perhaps four hundred "foreigners," most of whom had become naturalised Californians in order to hold grants of land under the Mexican law. By 1845, as a result of the emigration which was taking thousands into the Northwest, and also as a result of the restless curiosity to see the

country beyond the mountains which was bringing persistent parties of trappers and colonists from Santa Fé across the borders, the number of these "foreign" settlers had increased to some seven hundred.

They came from Oregon itself, and over the Sierras by the Salt Lake and Carson trails, and for the latter the first stopping place was Sutter's Fort, where the American River joined the Sacramento. This Captain Sutter, whose name was destined to ring across a continent—his name or that of his famous mill—was a Swiss, naturalised Californian. He was a man of extremely smart, military appearance, energetic, high spirited and liberal. He owned a dozen square leagues of land, several thousand head of cattle, sheep and horses, and conducted a profitable traffic in beaver skins. His fort, with its twelve cannon and its uniformed garrison of forty men, contained mills and shops, and schools where the Indians were taught blanket weaving and other trades, and around its ramparts wheat was grown, and vegetables, and fruit. It must have seemed a sort of golden Jerusalem to the exhausted emigrants, fresh from the hardships of deserts and mountains, and Captain Sutter received them all with the utmost cordiality and generosity, and sold them supplies in exchange for the implements and paraphernalia which they were only too eager to jettison from their groaning wagons.

And then, one day in 1845, a gentleman named

John C. Frémont arrived at Sutter's on horseback, accompanied by his bodyguard of five Delaware Indians, wearing a lawless adventurer's felt hat which a great many people mistook for a romantic halo. An officer in the United States' army, Mr. Frémont was officially on an expedition of exploration. The Mexican government, however, was inclined to view his arrival with a certain alarmed scepticism, especially when some of the more hot headed American settlers, encouraged by his continued presence, seized Sonoma, in June, 1846, and raised the historic "Bear Flag." Mr. Frémont, for his part, rode through the countryside and raised an army. He was, of course, gambling on a declaration of war between the United States and Mexico, and his adventurer's luck did not betray him. On July 7, 1846, Commodore Sloat hoisted the American flag over Monterey. When Commodore Sloat was superseded by Commodore Stockton, Mr. Frémont and his "explorers" dutifully enlisted under his command, and the two of them, together with General Kearney, proceeded to win Southern California in a series of highly fantastic "battles," interspersed with endless bickerings.

In 1847, Commodore Stockton appointed Mr. Frémont Governor of California, primarily for the purpose, apparently, of annoying General Kearney. The General immediately ordered the Governor to join his command, and instructions from Washington also reached him, reminding him of the topographical

nature of his original mission and suggesting that he resume his interrupted explorations. This Mr. Frémont, who much preferred being Governor, refused to do. But he was obliged, finally, to return to Washington where an unsympathetic court-martial convicted him of mutiny and misconduct. He was dismissed from the army, and pardoned by President Polk—a circumstance which provided him with the opportunity for a final picturesquely melodramatic gesture. He refused the pardon and sent in his resignation.

Mr. Frémont was no longer Governor, but California remained a part of the national concerns. The long western journey begun at Plymouth Rock, and at Jamestown, was over, brought to a close on the shores of the Pacific. From coast to coast, above a continent, a single Flag gave promise of an united destiny. . . .

2

And then, on January 24, 1848, John Marshall, a foreman at Sutter's sawmill, found a lump of gold.

One imagines him riding breathlessly back to the fort, to show his find to Captain Sutter. There must have been quite an uproar in the compound, while the Indians wondered what it was all about. At all events, Sam Brannan, the Mormon, came riding into San Francisco some time later, waving his hat and brandishing a bottle of the precious "dust," and shouting "Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!"

The entire town of San Francisco closed its shops, abandoned its ships, forsook its homes, put on its hat, and took to the foothills in a literal cloud of dust.

There followed that era of Arcadian simplicity and loyal honesty at the "diggings" which the original gold seekers were so soon to have cause to regret. The period of generous, mutual encouragement and charity, of faithful partners, of quick, roughly fashioned justice and reasonably law abiding conduct, and of fabulously rapid fortune making. Gold was so easy to find it was simpler to pick it up off the ground than to steal it. Men left their findings in open, unguarded cans on accessible shelves. There was gold dust in the air, it blew in one's eye, one breathed it into one's lungs, one rubbed one's finger along the rims of wagon wheels and turned away a millionaire.

So it seemed, during that first golden summer of 1848. . . .

3

The news of the gold discovery did not make much impression, at first, in the East. California was very far away, and the tales of gold brought home by captains of ships must be taken with a grain of salt. In August, 1848, the New York *Herald* published a letter from California in which the writer stated that he was credibly informed that a quantity of gold worth thirty dollars had been picked up recently in the bed of a stream of the Sacramento. Interesting

if true. In September, the *Herald* again printed a letter from California, written in July, which it presented without comment to its readers as an interesting item from this new territory so recently acquired.

"Oh, this California!" the writer exclaimed. "Presto, a gold fever arises, strikes everyone and drives everyone from his home. The writer has visited the gold country . . . our territory is turned upside down, people are leaving their wives and children, and laughing at an offer of ten dollars per day to finish a contract. . . . All are bound to the American Fork and Feather River, branches of the Sacramento, rivers whose banks and bottoms are filled with pure gold—where a bucket of dirt with a half hour's washing in running water produces a spoonful of black sand containing from seven to ten dollars' worth of gold. . . . A shovel sells for ten dollars, tin pans for the same, and flour at thirty-six a barrel. A common day's work of a man at the diggings turns out from five to thirty dollars, and one hundred dollars has been obtained in one day. . . .

"The whole country is in a rush, in a ferment. Where and how all this is to end is beyond my comprehension. That the placer of California will bring into the country thousands and thousands of immigrants is clear. . . . Ships are losing their crews, grass will soon grow in the streets. . . . Hoping this fever will not affect your affairs as much as it does mine. . . ."

It did not seem liable to do so to any such extent as that other fever which was raging in the metropolis —the cholera plague of 1848. On September 19, the

Washington *Union* remarked that the great danger in California was from lack of food, and enquired whether merchants might not find it profitable to send cargoes around to the Pacific Coast. The merchants did not appear unduly enthusiastic over such a speculation. On September 21, another Washington despatch remarked that—

"all Washington is in a ferment with the news of the immense bed of gold which it is said has been discovered in California. Nothing else is talked about. We do not know what to think of this gold story; it looks so marvelously like a speculation to induce a rapid emigration. It may all be true—we should be sorry in this enlightened age to declare our disbelief in anything."

On September 27, the *Herald* printed a third letter from California, with extracts from local newspapers giving the current prices for commodities, "showing that all this cry about gold has some solid foundation," and in the same issue it took space, finally, for an editorial on the subject, but only for the purpose of pointing a moral—

"The account of the gold sands found on the banks of the Sacramento, and the immense quantity of gold daily gathered by the people who flock to the rich Pactolus almost exceed in romance and riches the ancient stories about El Dorado. . . . No doubt the golden tales of these golden streams will excite the imaginations of many ardent and sanguine minds and lead them to think of packing up and removing off to

regions where they may hope to become rich thus rapidly. To all such we would say beware of the mania of hasty money making; beware of seeking to become rich by sudden and extraordinary means; be assured that all the gold in the world will not make you happy; pursue, quietly and steadily, the sober path of regular industry; be thankful, contented, and act with honor and honesty, and then you will be happier in the enjoyment of a peaceful conscience and a peaceful life than all the gold of California can make its possessors."

All through October and a great part of November public attention was entirely taken up with the doings of Mr. Van Buren and the Barnburners, and the Presidential campaign, and the Free Soil movement—when suddenly, on November 26, 1848, the Baltimore *Sun* printed the official government report on the gold region. "It is beyond all question that gold in immense quantities is being found daily in California. . . ."

The Gold Rush was on.

4

On December 9, the *Herald* found it impossible any longer to maintain its aloof attitude.

"The gold region in California!" it cried. "Startling discoveries. The El Dorado of the old Spaniards is discovered at last. We have now the highest official authority for believing in the discovery of vast gold mines in California, and that the discovery is the

greatest and most startling, not to say miraculous, that the history of the last five centuries can produce."

When they slipped on the top step, in those days, they always fell all the way to the bottom.

"We are informed that from thirty to fifty thousand dollars' worth of the precious metals is collected daily . . . and this, too, by using only the most common and primitive means, such as willow baskets and tin kettles. The people, it is said, actually pick it from the crevices in the rocks in lumps of one, two and three ounces with a jack-knife, and so plentiful is it that an ounce and a half was given for a box of Seidlitz powders. . . .

"In every direction vessels are being prepared to carry out passengers and merchandise to California. The mania for emigrating to California is spreading in every direction. Adventurers from every street in the city are concerting measures and collecting funds to pay their passages to California. . . . No doubt much disappointment may be encountered, but there is no doubt that this wonderful discovery will soon make San Francisco one of the largest cities on the Pacific, in fact the New York of California. . . ."

On the same day one of the first California advertisements appeared, that of Harnden and Company, offering to make arrangements for associations desirous of going to the gold region, at a charge of two hundred dollars per person. On December 11, the *Herald* reported that the gold mania was raging with intense vigor,

"and carrying off its victims hourly and daily. Preparations for emigration to the land of promise and gold on the most extended scale are being made, and ships freighted with all the necessary articles of life are being got in readiness at all our ports."

The first vessel to sail for California with passengers from the Atlantic seaboard seems to have been the bark *J. W. Coffin* from Boston, on December 7, followed by the bark *John Benson,* on December 11, and the ship *Florence,* on December 14, from New York. During the next two months some eleven thousand persons sailed from the eastern ports in one hundred and seventy-eight vessels.

On December 13, five columns on the front page of the *Herald* headed "Ho! for California!" were devoted to the gold regions, with a description of the country, useful information and an account of the various routes—by Panama, five thousand miles in thirty-five days, at a cost of four hundred dollars, by Cape Horn, seventeen thousand miles in one hundred and fifty days, for about two hundred dollars. On December 26, the *Herald's* special California edition was sold out in one hour. Around New Year's there seemed to be a lull, but in January, 1849, the spirit of emigration was, it seems, increasing and expanding every day, and—

"All classes of our citizens appear to be under the influence of this extraordinary mania. . . . Will it be the beginning of a new empire in the West; a revolution in the commercial highways of the world; a de-

population of the old States for the new republic on the shores of the Pacific; the future alone can answer. . . .

"In every Atlantic seaport, vessels are being fitted up, societies are being formed. All are rushing towards that wonderful California which sets the public mind almost on the highway to insanity. Look at the advertising columns of any journal and you will find abundant evidence of the singular prevalence of this strange movement. Every day men of property and means are advertising their possessions for sale in order to furnish themselves with means to reach that golden land. Every little city and town beyond the great sea ports is forming societies . . . and every day similar clubs of the young, educated and best classes of our population are leaving our shores. Poets, philosophers, lawyers, brokers, bankers, merchants, farmers, clergymen—all are feeling the impulse."

Because there had been hard times in the East and it seemed easier, for many of them, to go than to stay; because the opening up of the Northwest had accustomed them to the idea of transcontinental emigration and colored it with romance; because the Mexican war was over and there was nothing else for many restless young adventurers to do; and because at the end of the road there was the unfading, century old glamour of the golden fleece. Ten thousand were going by water, fifty thousand were making ready to go by land. More thousands were coming from Europe, from South America, from Australia, from Africa, from China. The Gold Rush was on. . . .

5

And, as though the whole business were not already sufficiently romantic, it was a song that rallied them. A silly song with a catchy refrain, such as men have always carried with them on their highest adventures. A song that went around the world, across the Seven Seas, from Salem to Kamchatka. A song written on the spur of the moment by three passengers aboard the bark *Eliza,* as she was preparing to sail from Salem, on December 26, 1848—hastily concocted from the original verses of Mr. Foster's *Oh Susanna*—

"I come from Alabama, with my banjo on my knee; I'm going to Louisiana, my true love for to see. . . . Oh, when I get to New Orleans, I'll look all round and round, and when I find Susanna, I'll fall right on the ground. . . . Oh, Susanna! Don't you cry for me, I come from Alabama, with my banjo on my knee."

They finished it just in time, the three *Eliza* passengers, and came out on the quarterdeck to sing it, just as the ship was pulling out—

"I come from Salem City,
With my washbowl on my knee;
I'm going to California,
The gold dust for to see. . . .
I jumped aboard the Liza ship,
And traveled on the sea,
And every time I thought of home

I wished it wasn't me!
The vessel reared like any horse
That had of oats a wealth,
It found it couldn't throw me,
So I thought I'd throw myself.

"I thought of all the pleasant times
We've had together here;
I thought I ought to cry a bit,
But couldn't find a tear.
The pilot bread was in my mouth,
The gold dust in my eye,
And though I'm going far away,
Dear brothers, don't you cry.
I soon shall be in Francisco,
And then I'll look all round,
And when I see the gold lumps there,
I'll pick them off the ground.

"I'll scrape the mountains clean, my boys,
I'll drain the rivers dry,
A pocket full of rocks bring home,
So brothers, don't you cry!
Oh, California!
That's the land for me,
I'm going to Sacramento,
With my washbowl on my knee."

There were other songs that came roaring into San Francisco harbor. The sailor's chanty—"Blow, boys, blow, for Californio! There's plenty of gold, so I've been told, on the banks of the Sacramento"; the one from London, to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*—

"Now's the time to change your clime,
Give up work and tasking;
Yankee Doodle all agog,
With the golden mania—
California's precious earth
Turns the whole world frantic,
Sell your traps and take a berth
Across the wild Atlantic——

"Gold is got in pan and pot,
Soup tureen and ladle,
Basket, bird cage, and what not,
Even to a cradle—
Choose your able bodied men,
All whose arms are brawny,
Give them picks and spades, and then
Off for Californy!"

and the one written aboard the *Tarolinta,* which illustrates the spirit which animated some of those argonauts of Forty-nine—

"Where the Sacramento's waters roll their golden tide along,
Which echoes through the mountains like a merry drinking song;
Where the Sierra Nevada lifts its crests unto the sky,
A home for freedom's eagles when the tempest's sweeping by;
Where the Bay of San Francisco—the Naples of the West—
Lies sleeping like an infant beside the ocean's breast;
There we go with dauntless spirits, and we go with hearts elate,
To build another empire—to found another State!"

But of them all, the Susanna song, with its countless local variations and translations, was the one that sent them swinging along—the marching song of the Gold Rush.

6

CALIFORNIANS!
HO! HIST!
ATTENTION!
Our rubber boats and tents
are unsurpassed. You cannot
face the gold rivers without
a rubber suit!

In December, 1848, there was already a whole column of California advertisements in the *Herald.* Packets, and steamers to the Isthmus, and associations calling for members—and rubber garments, trunks, patent medicines, tools, scales, digging and washing machines, crackers, hats, boots, pistols, cutlery, tents, matches, candles, guide books, canned goods, blankets, cough drops, coffee grinders, collapsible boats—every conceivable article which a gold digger might possibly require, all brought to his attention under such captions as Ho! For California! —Ho! Ye Californians!—For the Gold Region!—Californians! Ho! Hist!

Some of the notices—perhaps too many of the notices—were of a personal character, betraying the extent to which the gold mania had seized upon the

minds of hitherto prudent and sensible people; as, for instance, requests on the order of the following—

"Ho! For California! Wanted, a man to buy out a Britannia Ware factory for $1,500. This factory is in full operation with an extensive run of customers. The owner of this establishment can make from one to two thousand dollars a year, but thinks he can do better in California."

And some of the notices were simply fantastic—the result of a desire on the part of everyone who had anything whatsoever to sell to associate his goods with the movement which was crowding the shops. Of these, one of the most startling, perhaps, was the one which blandly announced—

"Ho! Ho! Ho! For California! Ho! Last not least! Persons going out to the gold regions are seriously advised to take, *among other necessaries,* a good lot of monuments and tombstones. A great saving can be effected by having their inscriptions cut in New York beforehand."

A great many of the notices, both in the advertisement columns and in the news sections, were concerned with the "associations" and "companies" which began almost at once to be formed in practically every community in the Union, in which usually some twenty or thirty adventurous souls banded together, after contributing two hundred dollars or so to the common pool, for the purpose of undertaking the western journey. The Wolverine Rangers, the Peoria Pioneers, the Philadelphia Pacific Adventur-

ers' Association, the Buffalo California Overland Association, the New Jersey Mining and Trading Company, the Mutual Trading Company of Salem, the Nantucket and California Company, the Rough and Ready Company of Boston—these were some of the titles which they adopted and painted on the canvas covers of their wagons.

And then there were the New England Pioneers —"a company of twelve respectable young gentlemen who will go armed with proper defensive weapons, and take with them a tent." And the cautious California Mining and Trading Expedition of Danvers, Massachusetts, of which "the members are all to remain at home, merely sending an agent to the gold mines to procure the ore and forward it home." And, finally, under the patronage of Horace Greeley, Miss Sedgwick, W. C. Bryant, and Henry Ward Beecher, the California Association of American Women, from whose notice one learns that—

"Mrs. Farnham's company of women to emigrate to California is in process of rapid formation. The splendid packet ship *Angelique* is engaged to carry the party out and is fitted up in a most elegant manner, and furnished in all respects so as to secure comfort and health to those on board.

"The objects of this association are such as to recommend it to the confidence and kindly aid of all who understand them. No person will be received into it who cannot bring from her clergyman or some authority of the town in which she resides ample testimonials of education, character and capacity, and it

A VIEW OF SAN FRANCISCO IN 1851

From a print by S. F. Marryatt

is the intention that all who unite with it shall be such as will be willing and capable of rendering themselves useful in relieving the sufferings of those in that country whose neglected and exposed manner of life cannot fail to prove very destructive. The occupations that await women in California are as numerous as the multiplied wants of the people who are congregated there, and the compensation will be almost such as they choose to demand."

From Mr. O. T. Howe's *Argonauts of* '49 one learns, however, that the venture was not successful, for when the *Angelique* sailed in May there were aboard, besides Mrs. Farnham—a one time matron at Sing Sing prison—and fifteen male passengers, only one maiden lady and two widows. Mrs. Farnham herself quarrelled with the Captain of the ship and was left behind in Valparaiso when she failed to return aboard at the appointed sailing hour. But after a while Valparaiso raised a public fund and sent her on to California. . . .

7

There were three ways of reaching California from the East—around the Horn, across the Isthmus of Panama, and overland across the Plains—concerning the circumstances and vicissitudes of each of which whole volumes might be written. It is not feasible, in these pages, to give more than a glimpse of these routes, more than a faint echo of the clamor which arose from the thousands who passed over them.

The route around the Horn was for a long while the least popular, because of the supposed dangers of the deep, the very real perils of the dreaded Cape, and the length of time involved. Its place in the transportation annals of the Gold Rush is more closely connected with the carrying of merchandise—cargoes which included everything from iron nails to marble statuary and gilded mirrors—and with the great clipper ships which the rush of freight at fabulous prices to California brought into being. Those matchless, record breaking, beautiful vessels —the *Flying Cloud,* the *Challenge,* the *Sea Witch,* the *Surprise,* the *Sovereign of the Seas*—which McKay, and Webb, and Bell were building, as fast as they could be gotten off the ways, for the great mercantile houses of the day, Low's, Griswold's, Bucklin and Crane, Grinnell and Minturn—the glory of an American merchant marine which, in less than twenty years, was destined, or condemned, to vanish utterly from the seas. . . .

The Panama itinerary was the one which attracted all of the earlier emigrants from the Atlantic seaboard, all the riff-raff of gamblers, adventurers and charlatans who were the first to swarm aboard the packets of the Pacific Mail, in raw hide boots, and slouch hats, and red shirts, bearded and panoplied with bowie knives and pistols with which they amused themselves shooting at the dolphins during the journey to the Isthmus.

And it seemed an excellent route. A short pas-

sage to Chagres, a pleasant trip up the river and by mule to Panama, and then the packets to San Francisco. The agents of the packet lines on the Atlantic side took pains to paint it in the most alluring colors. It was actually tragically different. And in New York, certainly, prospective passengers had been warned of what might be expected, in an article published in December, 1848, by the *Herald.*

"Hurry out of the village of Chagres which is pestilential. . . . Bear in mind that on the river you will be wholly dependent upon your own resources. . . . Avoid the sun; do not sleep out of your boat; bear the heat, bear the mosquitoes, do anything rather than expose yourself to the night air. . . . Take from two to four grains of sulphate of quinine every morning. . . ."

But they persisted in going. And in Chagres they found the miserable, floorless Crescent City Hotel, and a lack of provisions and a scarcity of boats. On the river they were tormented by mosquitoes and fleas, and driven out of their senses by the heat, so that they abandoned the stream which could have carried them at least as far as Cruces, and went ashore at Gorgona and took to the mule trail, when there were mules to be had. And then it was the death stricken, cholera haunted Gorgona Trail—with the mules sinking deeper and deeper into the clinging, black mud, under a broiling, fever brewing sun, while the vultures watched—that sinister burying ground of countless

scores who perished upon its poisoned highway, and made of it American soil in a day which the canal builders were scarcely to recall. . . .

And in the forsaken city of Panama—with its saloons, and its gambling hells, and its epidemics, its narrow, foul smelling streets, and its fever smitten throngs—they waited on the beach for the promised packets, racing out to the anchorage, eleven miles away, to fight their way aboard overcrowded, ill provisioned, inhospitable hulks.

And some grew tired of waiting, and started, deliriously, to row in open boats to San Francisco.

8

The overland route, also, claimed its toll. In the spring of 1849, with fifty thousand persons of all ages —men, women and children, infants and grandmothers—pouring through the camps on the Mississippi River, the cholera broke out and spread along the trails until some five thousand had succumbed to the disease. Those who crossed in the fall suffered incredible hardships. The earlier trains had consumed all the grass, and thousands of cattle perished from want of fodder, their decaying carcasses lining the pestilential roadside, together with broken down wagons and immense quantities of supplies. In the deserts, and more particularly in the terrible Humboldt Sink, hundreds died of thirst and exhaustion. In the mountains the rains and snows began earlier than usual that winter, and with unprecedented intensity,

and whole wagon loads of unfortunates were marooned without food in the drifts for two and three days at a time. Throughout the route the Indians, who earlier in the year had been friendly enough with their stock greeting learned from the teamsters—"How de do whoa haw God damn you"—were becoming more and more hostile and acutely menacing.

Independence, St. Joseph, Fort Child, Fort Laramie, the Platte, Fort Hall, the Sink, Carson River, the Sierra Nevada, Sutter's. . . .

One could not hope to evoke a more vivid picture of the crossing than is contained in the following hitherto unpublished letters of a young Forty-niner who made the trip from his home in Ohio in the spring of 1849. One may not presume to comment on this record of his journey, one can only regret the impossibility of reproducing the creased, blotted, yellowing sheets which he sent back, when occasion offered, by pony express, and which seem so eloquent today of matters so long since forgotten.

"St. Louis, March 23, 1849.

"Dear Father,

"I arrived at Cincinnati Sunday morning; a great many of the clothing stores and shops owned by Jews are kept open on that day which makes it look like any other day. We now intend to go to St. Joseph instead of Independence as a place of rendezvous, why I cannot tell. . . .

"The steamer *Consignee* has on board about 300 passengers with all their wagons, baggage and about 100 mules which makes quite a heavy load. It would

be quite pleasant for any person, if they were not hungry, to see the emigrants make a charge when breakfast is ready. They set three tables on the boat, the last just as good as the first, but it is difficult to make hungry folks believe so. Our fare is better than could be expected where there is so many to eat; we have good substantial food and plenty of it.

"On our passage down the Ohio we had to stop twice on account of the wind blowing almost a hurricane. The first place was very wild and beautiful, abounding in game. As soon as the boat touched the shore almost everyone left, taking with them their guns. . . . When the wind ceased to blow a little the Captain of the boat thought we could start again without danger, but when he rang the bell for all to come aboard quite a number of the boys could not be found. . . . The Captain waited very patiently and took it very cool considering that he is a steamboat captain. He looked a little fierce but said nothing. . . .

"St. Louis is a very busy place likewise a very dirty place. It is a much better place for getting an outfit, but the price of everything is very high. . . ."

"St. Joseph, April 14, 1849.

"Dear Father,

"We will not start from here perhaps much before the first of May because the grass will not be large enough to support our mules. Our messes are ready to start any time, having all our mules broken, clothes, provisions, etc., in good order. . . . We thought for some time the mules could never be tamed or made to quit kicking until they kicked the bucket, but now they work very well and only one of them kicks bad. They cost us 67 dollars per head. Mules can be

bought anywhere in this state at prices varying from 40 to 75 dollars; a good yoke of oxen can be bought for 50 dollars. . . .

"The inhabitants of this place with some few exceptions are sharpers; they know they never will have any more dealings with the emigrants and make it a point to shave them if they can. There is now encamped around the town about 1,000 persons, about half of whom are going to take oxen. Whole families are going, men, women, children, dogs and all. Here they think no more of going to Oregon or California than we at home do of going to New Orleans. The men from the country that come into town nearly all wear butternut colored pants and are very rough looking customers. Any person of much discernment would not wonder that this is a Locofoco state. . . .

"There is now much dissatisfaction in this company. Every member of the company were requested to pay 3 dollars each for the purpose of purchasing a wagon for the sick to ride in, and fifty cents for an initiation fee; nearly all the members paid . . . the sick wagon was bought, some medicine, a forge, and several other articles. After purchasing these there remained in the hands of the treasurer five or six hundred dollars, who will not give any satisfactory account to the company of the expenditure of it or where it is. . . . I believe the company is too large and the wagons of most of the messes entirely too heavy. . . . Many of the wagons with all their fixings weigh about a ton.

"The inhabitants of this place do not pay much attention to the observance of the Sabbath as a day of rest; they chop wood, keep most of the stores open, shoot at a mark, hunt, fish, etc. . . . Boys, instead of going to Sunday school, are in the street playing ball,

marbles, and shooting with bows and arrows. It appears to be a kind of holiday.

"We have a very good boarding place . . . the owner of the house is a Mormon and a very clever fellow. We certainly have fine times. I never enjoyed myself better in my life. . . ."

"Fort Child, May 17, 1849.

"Dear Father,

"The 19th of April we started from St. Joseph in good health for the far west. . . . Our journey from St. Joseph to Fort Kearney was very pleasant except when we were mired crossing some slue or swamp. . . .

"At Willow Slue the first team stalled about the middle of the swamp, none of your little sticks that can be pried out with a rail, but the mules sink clear to their bellies and have to be unharnessed. The wagon then has to be unloaded and all hands lift at the wheel. . . . It does not matter much who sticks, all are expected to help each other out. . . . Some of the people when we left home told us we were asses, I thought there was some truth in what they said when we were crossing Willow Slue. . . . We pitched our tents at 9 o'clock at night; the next thing was our supper, crackers for soup, crackers for meat, and crackers for dessert, but an appetite was not wanting. . . .

"We now are in Indian territory and have to stand guard systematically. . . ."

"Fort Laramie, June 4, 1849.

"Dear Father,

"We arrived here yesterday and are now throwing away our superfluous baggage, repacking our wag-

ons, in order to get along as fast as possible. . . . Along the road from Fort Child to Fort Laramie is scattered bacon, coffee, axes, chains, wagons, flour, and almost every article that is made use of in such an expedition as this. A person with a dozen good mules to draw them could pick up enough articles on the road between here and the Missouri to make quite a fortune. . . .

"We have seen but very few Indians, except about 1,000 Sioux who were encamped when we crossed the Platte. . . . They did not molest us in any way, but we always keep a good guard at night, and stake our mules inside of the karal as it is called. . . .

"We generally get up before sunrise, get breakfast, water and harness our mules, and start between six and half past, travel until about eleven, then if we find grass we stop and graze the mules, eat a little ourselves, and start at one o'clock again and travel until four, five or six according to circumstances.

"A tent pin has just blown into the tent and of course upset the ink—from the appearance of the blot you can form a correct idea of the channel of the Platte river. . . ."

"Sutter's Mill, August 14, 1849.

"Dear Father,

"The last time I wrote home was when we were at Fort Laramie. I have had no opportunity of sending any letters back to the States—no persons going that way, all for California.

"After we left Laramie we traveled rapidly to get ahead of as many trains as possible, fearing that grass would be scarce. . . . We passed a great many wagons on the Black Hills between the fort and the

north fork of the Platte. There we were delayed two days, having to wait until upwards of 100 wagons were ferried across. This is the most difficult stream to cross on the whole route. . . . We reached the South Pass the 17th, crossed it and drank of the water that empties into the Pacific. I bought a horse having concluded to ride the rest of the way. I walked from St. Joseph to the Pass, not riding half a mile the whole distance. . . .

"We arrived at Fort Hall the 30th of June where we obtained some bread, fresh butter and milk, great luxuries to emigrants who have been living on salt pork, beans and corn bread. We were informed that only about 130 wagons were now ahead of us. . . .

"We came to the head waters of Humboldt, or Mary's, the 8th, where we began to have dust, sand and poor grass where we had been informed would be excellent grass and plenty of it. The farther we traveled on the river the worse the water became, and grass there was none. . . . It certainly is the most dreary valley I ever saw. We traveled along the river eleven days, going most of the distance in the night to avoid the heat. We generally arose at three in the morning, traveled until ten in the forenoon, when we would stop until three or four in the afternoon, then go ahead until about ten at night.

"We reached the sink of the river the 19th at midnight. The sink is a large, swampy looking place covered with rushes, except in several places where there is large ponds of water where the water of the river evaporates or sinks into the ground. The water of the sink was so bad our mules would not drink it. We came five or six miles this side of the sink and stopped. We started again at the break of day without breakfast. At eight o'clock we came to the sulphur springs; we gave our animals at this place what

water they would drink. It is 45 miles from the springs to Carson River. Part of the road is good, but the last twelve miles is the worst kind of deep sand. Ten miles from the sulphur springs is a stream of water so salt that the animals that drank it were injured much more than benefitted by it.

"From here to Carson River the road is lined with the dead bodies of horses, oxen and mules that have perished from the effects of fatigue, heat and want of water. . . . We saw a great many wagons left by the side of the road. . . . We came to the heavy sand twelve miles from the river at midnight. We left all of our wagons at the edge of the sand, stripped the mules of their harness, and started them for the river. . . . We arrived at the river by daylight, leaving behind ten or a dozen mules out of 60. . . . We went back after our wagons the next day and brought them into camp. . . . We found good grass on Carson River—10 miles up the river we found another desert 15 miles across, then grass, and another desert of 20 miles.

"We traveled up Carson River 100 miles before we came to the first range of the Sierra Nevada. . . . We struck the pass through the first mountain the 29th of July. The road is worse than any we have seen. Broken wagons are scattered from one end to the other. We were from noon until nine o'clock at night going 7 miles. . . . The next day we crossed the second mountain and had to put twelve mules to each wagon and then push hard to get it to the top. . . .

"We arrived at the dry diggings the 4th of August. Provisions are plenty, but the price is high —beef 50 cents, pork one dollar, flour 37-1/2 cents, sugar 50 cents, powder six dollars per pound. We arrived at Sutter's Mill the 5th. Here men were

digging; they make three dollars per day to thirty. A man can get ten dollars per day for driving an ox team—digging gold is about as hard work as quarrying stone. . . .

"I have been down to Sutter's Fort once. Two miles below the fort is Sacramento City where town lots and canvas houses rent as high as they do in the city of New York. . . . Ships come up the Sacramento to this place; Chileans, Sandwich Islanders and Chinese are here, and more money afloat than I ever saw in the same length of time. . . . I would like to see some of the old sober country fellows at home let down in Sacramento City . . . they would see something more in the shape of vice and iniquity than ever they saw before; yes, more in one day than they would see about home in forty years. They would think a little dance was not such a dreadful thing after all. . . .

"Money is to be made here if a person is economical and industrious, but I would not advise any to come to this country by any means. . . ."

9

Those who came by sea passed one day through the Golden Gate and found themselves at San Francisco.

Australian Sydney Town, Little Chile, French Keskydee Ville, the Mission—spread out upon a black, sandy beach fringing the shore of Yerba Buena Cove, from the rocks at Clark's Point at the foot of Telegraph Hill, with its Broadway Pier near Sansome Street; past the Clay Street slopes, and the Long Wharf at the extension of Commercial Street where the "cheap johns" held their second hand

auctions, and the California Street ridges; over the Market Street heights through the Happy Valley as far as Rincon Point. Wooden shacks and shanties, a maze of canvas and muslin tents and lean-tos, rickety frame buildings, the occasional dignity of solid brick, a flag pole in front of the old adobe custom house in the Plaza—Portsmouth Square with its Bee Hive where the band played to attract customers, and its City Hotel, and its El Dorado saloon —Montgomery Street along the water's edge. All among the windswept sandhills covered with sage and faded laurel, under a blazing sun in a ceaseless swirl of dust in summer, and in a morass of engulfing mud in winter. . . .

A city of fabulous prices, where bread cost fifty cents a loaf, eggs two dollars a dozen, tin tacks ten dollars apiece, and paper of any sort one hundred and fifty dollars a sheet; where land was worth one thousand dollars a foot on the Plaza; where small shacks were rented at three thousand dollars a month, the two and a half story Parker House at fifteen thousand dollars a month, and the El Dorado gambling tent at forty thousand dollars a month; and where the interest on loans was figured at 15% a month, and sometimes at 25% a week, for a week or a month was the only recognised unit of time in that breathless community.

A city in which transients—those who could not afford to pay anywhere from twenty-five to a hundred dollars a week for a room at the Fremont, or the Colonnade, or the English Albion, or the French

Lafayette House, and even two hundred and fifty dollars at Ward's—slept thirty, and forty, and fifty in a room, tier on tier, in cots, in wooden bunks, on the floor, along with the fleas and the vermin, in lodging houses at fifteen dollars a week. A city in which—if one did not care to eat in the "joints" or at Whang Ton's and Tong Ling's—one might go to Ward's, or Tortoni's, or to the Alhambra, or to the oil cloth and muslin splendor of Delmonico's, and spend one dollar for soup, a dollar and a half for fish and roast, two dollars for an omelette, and two dollars and a half for a pint of "champagne."

It was a boisterous, carousing, gambling city, with its saloons and palaces where they played keeno, and faro out of the "sardine box," and Mexican monte, rondo, rouge et noir, lansquenet, and vingt et un, the roulette, tiger and elephant wheel games, and chuck a luck and "sweat cloths" with the dice—the Tontine on Montgomery Street, and the Bela Union, and the Rendezvous, and the splendid, flag festooned El Dorado facing the Plaza, where they charged one hundred and eighty dollars a day for a private game, and where as much as twenty thousand dollars had been wagered on the turn of a card.

A place filled with plate glass mirrors, and statuary, and chandeliers, and enormous oil paintings, reeking with "long nine" cigar smoke, blaring with noise from the band in the gallery and from the mechanical music box on the glittering bar, with its pyramids of crystal and its bartenders in white serving "forty-two calibre" whiskey—

"Dang my buttons! I pledge you, partner—here's all the hair off your head!"

"Hoping these few lines will find you enjoying the same blessing, Sir!"

and crowded day and night with all sorts and conditions of men, young men, bristling with six shooters—men who had been to the mines; men who had never left the city of endless opportunities; men who had "coyoted" and "found color" planking down their "pay dirt" on the tables; men who had "prospected" and been "frozen out" hoping to "bum" a drink or a loan; men from the camps—the Git up and Git, the Hell's Delight, the Petticoat Slide, the Shirt Tail Cañon, and the Ground Hog's Glory—swaggering about with feathers in their broad brimmed hats, and red shirts and striped trousers, bright Chinese scarves, silver buckled belts loaded with weapons, and braided beards tied under their chins. . . .

And it was an unruly, disorderly, riotous city in the spring of 1849, with its Sydney Ducks, a brotherhood of cutthroats and thieves composed of hoodlums from the Australian penal settlements, "bummers" from the mines, deserters from the abandoned ships that filled the harbor with their melancholy hulls, "veterans" of the old New York Regiment of Volunteers, and all the English speaking scum and sweepings of the town.

Dissipated young ruffians, lounging in and out of bars and hotels for whose services they considered themselves exempt from payment, displaying the most exaggerated elegances of diamond studded shirt

fronts and pomaded hair, calling themselves the Hounds, or the San Francisco Society of Regulators, and organised as a self-constituted police force —with a headquarters in the Tammany Hall tent on Kearney Street, an initiation fee of ten dollars, a hierarchy of bullying "lieutenants" and "captains," and a "Chief Rioter and Master of the Military"— whose only real purpose was to terrorise the city, become thoroughly intoxicated on Sunday afternoons in the dives of Sydney Town, the Boar's Head, the Tam O'Shanter, the Magpie and the Shades, hold a parade with banners and bands, pistols and clubs, and wind up the day by descending on the Arab and Chilean quarters and utterly ransacking them.

They did it once too often, however, and in July, 1849, after an unusually violent manifestation of Hound lawlessness, the citizens turned out themselves and drove the Regulators once and for all into the Bay.

Fabulous, Forty-niners' San Francisco. . . .

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And there one must leave them—so busy, so breathlessly busy, rushing furiously from one side of town to the other to see a man about a million dollars, galloping wildly on horseback through the seething uproar of Montgomery Street to find the pot of gold at the end of a hundred fugitive rainbows.

A swarming, good natured, perspiring, methodical madhouse—merchants, preachers, gamblers, vio-

linists, fortune tellers, pawnbrokers, acrobats, card sharpers, patent medicine quacks, piano tuners, bartenders, bootblacks, flute players, hack drivers, convicts, itinerant harpists, phrenologists, pioneers, and dandies—white, brown, yellow, and black, from Valparaiso, and Hong Kong, and Constantinople, and Boston. A glorious, ridiculous, dust stained, gold spattered three ring circus—a characteristic, paradoxical climax to the fabulous decade—flourishing its signature across one of the most extraordinary pages of the country's history—

"Where the Bay of San Francisco—the Naples of the West—
Lies sleeping like an infant beside the ocean's breast;
There we go with dauntless spirits, and we go with hearts elate,
To build another empire—to found another State!"

THE END

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